Introduction (& Disclaimer)

The authors offer a unique perspective on the history of Albuquerque’s Open Space Program going back over 50 years as advocates and managers of open space. They were both witnesses to, and participants in, the history recounted here. Rex Funk arrived in Albuquerque in 1969 to teach science courses at West Mesa High School. He quickly became an open space advocate working with the Bosque Society to establish a nature center and preserve along the Rio Grande in Albuquerque. He went on to serve on several boards and task forces including chairing the Open Space Task Force. He was a leader in the effort to save the Elena Gallegos lands and create the Open Space Trust Fund in 1982. He was hired that year as the City’s first Open Space Planner, and later became the first Superintendent of the Open Space Division of the City Parks and Recreation Department. He retired from the City in 1994.

Matt Schmader- - - - (Matt to add bio)

This work is a memoir of our combined experience and recollections supplemented by archival information and illustrations from the files of the Open Space Division and other sources. In writing it, we have sought to give credit to many of the people who contributed to Albuquerque’s open space legacy. It would be impossible, due to space limitations alone, to credit everyone involved, and any omissions or inaccuracies are the responsibility of the authors. We have concluded each chapter with an assessment of the significance of the events recounted, along with a “What I Learned” capsule highlighting a lesson learned along the way. We hope that this historical account will help inspire others to continue protecting Albuquerque’s hard-won legacy of open space. Our primary inspiration, however, will always be the incredible natural setting of the City.

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