

# NEVVIEW 2019 I THEN & NOW



THE NATURE CONSERVANCY



## The Nature Conservancy in New Mexico

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# DEAR FRIENDS,

Welcome to the 40th anniversary edition of our annual report! As I think back on our chapter's history and impact within New Mexico, I am reminded of an aspirational mantra that our organization has used to guide us for many years: "tangible and lasting conservation results at a large scale." I hope, and believe, that refrain accurately portrays our conservation legacy here. But beyond *what* we have achieved, I am also proud of *how* we have pursued our vision. We have consistently sought to use the best available science and brought together diverse stakeholders to create collaborative conservation projects that will stand the test of time.

The scale and scope of the challenges to our environment that we are now facing are far beyond anything that we could have imagined when we started this chapter in 1979. But with your help and support, I am hopeful that the same organizational DNA that led to our past successes will provide us with the insight and the courage to confront these issues. Future success is critical—not just for us, but so that future generations of New Mexicans can continue to revel in our extraordinary Land of Enchantment.

Thank you,

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Terry Sullivan, State Director

ON THE COVER The San Juan River flows through Navajo Lake State Park in northwestern New Mexico. In 2011, The Nature Conservancy joined several state, federal and Native American partners in a comprehensive effort to restore the San Juan River, a major waterway of the Colorado River Basin and home to unique native fish. The project is restoring six key reaches of the San Juan River as it flows through the Navajo Nation. © Erika Nortemann/TNC THIS PAGE LEFT TO RIGHT TOP ROW State Director Terry Sullivan © Alan Eckert Photography; Staff, trustees, the mayor of Santa Fe and friends embrace at the 40th Anniversary celebration at the Santa Fe Railyard in August 2019. © TNC OPPOSITE PAGE LARGE PHOTO Rio Nutria Preserve © TNC INSET CLOCKWISE Rio Nutria Preserve © Bob Findling; Tree planting in Albuquerque © Natalie Sommer/TNC; Gila River © Michael Fugagli; Acequia gate, Arroyo Seco © Alan Eckert Photography

# PIVOTAL PROJECT

Because of your support, The Nature Conservancy has had a profound and lasting impact throughout New Mexico and beyond. While we've completed many projects that conserve the lands, waters and diversity of New Mexico's living legacy, a few of those successes stand out as pivotal accomplishments.

#### **RIO NUTRIA PRESERVE**

Since 1990, TNC has worked with state agencies, the Zuni Tribe and other partners to acquire and manage 1,712 acres along the Rio Nutria. In west-central New Mexico, the preserve protects four miles of the river's headwaters, the best and most essential remaining habitat for an endangered fish called the Zuni bluehead sucker.

#### **RIO GRANDE WATER FUND**

Led by TNC and now in its fifth year, the Rio Grande Water Fund is an innovative collaboration of more than 80 agencies, businesses and organizations that work together to restore at-risk forests so they will be resilient to wildfire. By creating healthy forests, we are protecting New Mexico's water supply, economy and way of life for current and future generations. The Water Fund provides resources for large-scale forest and watershed restoration treatments on 600,000 acres—including thinning

overgrown forests, managing fire, restoring wetlands and streams, educating youth, providing research to policy makers and creating forestry and wood products jobs.

#### **URBAN CONSERVATION**

Since 2016, TNC has been working with local partners to enhance the relationship between the city and nature in Albuquerque's communities so both can thrive. In addition to our engagement in the watershed to protect Albuquerque's drinking water, we are focused on reducing heat impacts and expanding the urban tree canopy. This year has been especially fulfilling, as we collaborated with neighbors and partners to build Albuquerque's first pop-up park in the International District and planted native and desert trees in in several neighborhoods.

#### **GILA RIVER**

To protect one of the last free-flowing rivers in the Southwest, TNC established the Gila Riparian Preserve in 1980. We now manage 1,200 acres and five miles of river in the preserve and focus on whole-watershed protection. Collaborating with public agencies and private land holders, we are restoring the river's natural ebbs and flows, encouraging recovery of riparian forests, and using periodic, low-intensity fire to reduce the threat of severe, destructive burns.



# **MAO** THEN & NOW Organ Mountains/Dripping Springs

Long before Spanish explorers arrived in the late 1500s, Paleo-Indians found rich hunting grounds around the magnificent peaks and grasslands of what's now known as the Organ Mountains. Surviving over the eons are their stories of hunting and survival, inscribed on the rocks and cliff faces that turn an amber-golden hue in the early morning hours.

The Organ Mountains also abound with stories of Pueblo tribes, outlaws, Apache warriors, and ranchers yearning to prosper. Though their backgrounds and ambitions varied, they all shared a strong common interest in the land's incredible wildlife, sprawling grasslands, glorious mountains and surprisingly steady springs.

By the mid-20th century, people's strong draw to the Organ Mountains' natural resources also threatened those same natural elements. Certain agricultural and mining practices, water withdrawals and housing and commercial development posed myriad threats to some of the region's exceptional natural communities, wildlife habitat and rare plant and animal species—including some found nowhere else on the planet.

Not surprisingly, The Nature Conservancy and its scientists have long focused on the Organ Mountains because of the area's exceptional natural communities and the threats posed to them. Since 1988, TNC has acquired more than 3,300 acres in the Organ Mountains and conveyed them to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

Among those lands was the 2,200-acre Cox Ranch, formerly owned by William W. Cox, a colorful rancher whose own story connects with legendary lawman Pat Garrett and outlaw Billy the Kid. One of Cox's many acquisitions was an array of extraordinary rock walls that weep water. Before his purchase, the site was a thriving resort for tuberculosis patients, called Dripping Springs. When TNC acquired the property in 1989, Dripping Springs had become a ghost town.

In 2014, after a thorough public review process, President Barack Obama established the Organ Mountains–Desert Peaks National Monument, consisting of nearly 500,000 acres and managed by BLM. One of the many highlights of the national monument is Dripping Springs Natural Area, which includes popular hiking trails, interpretive displays, a visitor center and opportunities to see the spectacular Organ Mountains primrose, Gambel's quail, peregrine falcon and many other wildlife species.





LARGE PHOTO Dripping Springs © Bob Wick/BLM; INSET LEFT TO RIGHT Mountain lion © Paul Berquist; Organ Mountains © BLM; A juvenile, ladder-backed woodpecker (*Picoides scalaris*). © Bob Griffith; Organ Mountains © Bob Wick/BLM



In 1989, The Nature Conservancy acquired the 2,200-acre Cox Ranch, one of several tracts in the Organ Mountains that TNC has transferred to the Bureau of Land Management.

Today, Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument is bringing jobs and opportunities to celebrate the human and natural histories of this special place, including Dripping Springs Natural Area.

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# THE NATURE CONSERVANCY THE NATURE CONSERVANCY

# Santa Fe Canyon Preserve

The contours of Santa Fe Canyon tell the story of a river that once brought life to a young city and now, once again, is bringing a surprising diversity of plants and wildlife to the community.

Where the Santa Fe River flows through this wide canyon, engineers in the late 1800s saw an opportunity to provide water to the growing city of Santa Fe. By 1881, the city had built a stone dam to harness the river as a water supply. Only 23 years later, a flood filled the reservoir with silt. By then the city had built Two-Mile Dam, the second of four dams to store the Santa Fe River's seasonal flows.

Aside from providing essential water, the Santa Fe River was also an important source for hydroelectric power for decades. By 1994, long after Two-Mile Reservoir was abandoned as a primary water source, the dam was removed due to safety concerns.

The restoration of the area began in 2000 when the Public Service Company of New Mexico (PNM) donated their property on Upper Canyon Road to The Nature Conservancy. Developers donated an additional five parcels of land containing more than 335 acres, continuing the momentum. "What happened here at Santa Fe Canyon is a great example of a corporate and nonprofit collaboration and an incredibly generous philanthropic vision by PNM to establish this preserve for the community," says TNC state director Terry Sullivan.

Now, the 525-acre preserve and its 1.5-mile trail network are enjoyed by thousands of people who come from Santa Fe and far

away. Interpretive displays tell the story of the land, as well as its own natural features; for example, piñon and juniper form a "bathtub ring" of the former reservoir's one-time high-water mark.

Today's visitors also see the results of TNC's ongoing efforts to restore Santa Fe Canyon's lands and waters, the result of a grant from Intel Corp. Once the cottonwood and willow forest was re-established, beavers returned to this stretch of river, creating new habitats for numerous other animals. And in April and May, the canyon is filled with the sounds of rare northern leopard frogs calling for mates once again.





LARGE PHOTO Santa Fe Canyon © Alan Eckert Photography; INSET LEFT TO RIGHT Staff led a field trip at our Santa Fe Canyon Preserve earlier this year. © TNC; Northern leopard frog © Mark Godfrey/TNC; TNC's Santa Fe Canyon Preserve was once the site of a dam that provided drinking water and hydropower to the city. © TNC; Whitetail deer © TNC







In 2000, the Public Service Company of New Mexico donated land in Santa Fe Canyon that had once been used to provide water and generate electricity for the city of Santa Fe.

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The 525-acre preserve is visited annually by thousands of people who enjoy its trails and interpretive displays that show this remarkable site's natural and social history.

#### 1973 Sevilleta Ranch

The Nature Conservancy acquires the 220,000-acre Sevilleta Ranch and transfers the property to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, establishing the Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge. At the time, this is the largest single acquisition in TNC history.



### 1979

**TNC in New Mexico** The chapter is formally chartered and authorized by the Board of Governors to "engage in natural area preservation activities."



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for a fish species called

2000 Santa Fe Canyon PNM donates 200 acres in the Santa Fe River Watershed, which

ultimately serves as the foundation of the Santa Fe Canyon Preserve.



#### 2005 Rancho El Uno

TNC and our partner in Mexico, Pronatura Noreste, acquire 46,000-acre Rancho El Uno in the Janos grassland, which is contiguous with the Gray Ranch. This was the largest private conservation acquisition in the history of Mexico.

#### 2006 **Climate Change**

Initiative TNC launches the Southwest Climate Change Initiative, a three-year program that established tools to help communities and landscapes adapt to climate change.



## 2009

Janos Grasslands The government of Mexico designates 1.3 million acres of the Janos grasslands as the Janos Biosphere Reserve, one of the largest grassland reserves on the planet.

# 2010

Santa Fe Canyon Preserve

An additional 335 acres of land are donated to the Santa Fe Canyon Preserve.





## 1980

#### **Gila River**

TNC initiates efforts to preserve riparian woodlands in the Gila River watershed, known as the Gila Riparian Project.

## 1983

#### **Conservation Targets**

Mimbres River, Rattlesnake Springs, Kuenzler Cactus, Jornada Bat Caves, and the Sabo Preserve are announced as critical conservation targets. TNC protects all five sites by the year 2000.

# 1989

#### **Dripping Springs**

TNC acquires the 2,200-acre Cox Ranch in the Organ Mountains. After it is transferred to the Bureau of Land Management, the ranch becomes the Dripping Springs Natural Area.



#### **1990** Gray Ranch

TNC acquires the 320,000-acre Gray Ranch, which, at the time, was the largest conservation project in the history of all TNC's global chapters.

## 2014

**Rio Grande Water Fund** The launch of the Rio Grande Water Fund offers a comprehensive plan for wildfire management and water

source protection to

restore forests and

secure fresh water

for one million

New Mexicans.

## 2016

#### **Urban Conservation**

TNC establishes an Urban Conservation Program in Albuquerque and adds Climate and Energy to our strategic framework.

#### 2018 Gaining Momentum

Now supported by more than 70 public and private organizations, the Rio Grande Water Fund restores 33,000 acres of forest this year alone. The total number is now 108,000 acres treated with thinning, controlled burns and managed natural fires.

#### 2019 New Office

We open our new office in the vibrant Santa Fe Railyard.



2019 Tackling Climate Change

We help to pass two state laws, the Energy Transition Act and Forest and Watershed Restoration Act.

## 2019

Planting Trees

With community groups, our urban program starts planting trees in Albuquerque neighborhoods.



тор LEFT то RIGHT © Pixabay © Dave Lauridsen; воттом LEFT то RIGHT © Leslie Ikenda/ NM Dept. of Game and Fish © Alan Eckert Photography; © Dave Lauridsen; © Alan Eckert Photography; © iStockphoto; © TNC; © Dave Lauridsen; © Natalie Sommer/TNC

40 YEARS IN NEW MEXICO

# THE NATURE CONSERVANCY THE NATURE CONSERVANCY

# **One Conservancy**

Indispensable to The Nature Conservancy's success are our vision, goals and measures. They define our conduct and our drive for tangible, lasting results.

These values include. Integrity Beyond Reproach; Respect for People, Communities, and Cultures; Commitment to Diversity; Tangible, Lasting Results; and One Conservancy. Here in New Mexico and throughout our work around the world, we believe deeply in these values and do our best to live by them every day.

Since 1979, when TNC in New Mexico was formally chartered, we have made an enormous impact on the state in which we live, work and play—protecting 1.5 million acres and influencing management on another 18 million acres.

Today, as TNC works in every state and more than 70 countries, we are proud to have assisted our colleagues across the globe achieve their conservation goals, too. With your generous support, we are working with TNC teams and partners beyond our state and country borders to safeguard the natural world we all rely on—and to set us on the path to a more hopeful, sustainable future.

A few examples of our assistance for international initiatives include helping to protect more than a million acres of land in Mexico through the purchase of Rancho El Uno and the

establishment of a federal Biosphere Reserve; support in protecting 13,000 acres of Patagonia grasslands; saving the endangered hirola antelope; and helping to protect habitat for orangutans in Indonesia and elephants in Africa.

To learn more about TNC's conservation work around the world, visit **nature.org** and explore your interests.





LARGE PHOTO Guanacos (*Lama guanicoe*) roam the grasslands outside Rio Gallegos, Argentina. © Nick Hall INSET LEFT TO RIGHT Elephants in Kruger National Park, South Africa © Emily Cadik/TNC Photo Contest 2018; Reservoir on the Kafue River created by the Kafue Gorge Dam, Zambia. The Kafue River is part of TNC's Zambezi River project for the Campaign for a Sustainable Planet. © Patrick McCarthy/TNC; Baby orangutan in Indonesia © Jes O'Hare







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In 1980, a year after the New Mexico Chapter was officially chartered, TNC launched its International THEN Conservation Program to identify natural areas and organizations in Latin America in need of technical and financial assistance.

TNC impacts conservation in 72 countries across six continents, thanks to supporters in New Mexico and beyond.  ${\boldsymbol{z}}$ 

# THANKS

The Nature Conservancy's accomplishments are only made possible by the many individuals, organizations, businesses and foundations that made gifts to our vital conservation programs during fiscal year 2019 (July 1, 2018–June 30, 2019). Every gift plays a crucial role in our work—for people and nature. We thank you for your commitment to our mission.\*

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# DONOR PROFILE Marilyn and Rory Holscher



#### INVESTING IN NEW MEXICO'S WATER SECURITY

Marilyn and Rory Holscher have been members of The Nature Conservancy since 1985, joining the organization because of the people involved—who live and breathe the outdoors—and the pragmatism and idealism of the work.

Their connection to and love for nature

go back to their childhoods, both growing up near rivers and creeks where they spent countless hours. Marilyn, who grew up near industrial Gary, Indiana, distinctly remembers the contrast between the natural environment outside her doorstep and the steel mills that pumped out emissions impacting the region's air quality.

It was those early days, witnessing the differences between the natural world and the built-up environment, that influenced their commitment to conservation.

When they moved from the Midwest, where there is an abundance of water, to New Mexico, Marilyn and Rory learned the significance of water issues in the arid Southwest and how important it is to protect forested watersheds for communities. It's the reason they invested in TNC's Rio Grande Water Fund.

The way Rory tells it, "As the climate changes, we need our natural resources to be managed in a thoughtful and forward-looking way. And that is what the Rio Grande Water Fund does."

The Nature Conservancy is grateful to the Holschers for their support of the Water Fund and their enthusiasm for protecting water sources in New Mexico for the generations that follow.

Interested in investing in the Rio Grande Water Fund, too? Contact Jackie Hall, director of philanthropy, at 505-946-2021 or jacquelyn\_hall@tnc.org.

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THIS PAGE INSET Rory and Marilyn Holscher Courtesy of Rory and Marilyn Holscher; LARGE PHOTO Rio Grande @ Alan Eckert Photography

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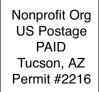


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