



Bernalillo County Open Space News

Bernalillo County Open Space strives to be a dynamic network of properties with important natural or cultural resources managed to benefit people, plants, and wildlife by protecting and enhancing viewsheds, water resources, wildlife habitat, cultural/historic sites, and prime agricultural lands; and providing resource-based recreation and environmental education.

A Message from the Parks and Recreation Director, Ed Chismar

Open Space: A Bernalillo County Movement



Within a short drive from almost any County location, one can find open spaces that capture vistas, include gentle trails, and provide a home to wildlife. If you seek refuge from the continued pressures at work, your smart phone, or your iPad, then it's time to ignite your motivation, and experience the peace found in Bernalillo County Open Space.

Or if you prefer, you can join one or more of the outdoor education programs offered.

Bernalillo County is like no other county in the State. With a population of more than 660,000 in an urban environment, one would expect an environment comprised of paved roads, shopping centers, and homes. Crisscrossed by two very busy interstates, Bernalillo County is a vibrant, busy place. Whether you come to visit, or are a local—look closely—the County has a diverse preserve of open spaces to regenerate your fire for life.

For example, the Backyard Farming Series, the Jr. Master Gardeners program, or the Master Naturalist Program just might be for you. Be sure to read about these 2012 offerings in the next issue of Open Space News. If you are part of a group, there are many improvement projects still waiting to be completed. Bernalillo County's diverse Open Spaces beckon you, and we welcome your participation.

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Bernalillo County Open Space
111 Union Square Street SE, Suite 200
Albuquerque, NM 87102
505-314-0398
www.bernco.gov/openspace

Agriculture and Open Space

Backyard Farming Series

There is nothing like eating a salad full of rich greens and fresh veggies straight from the garden or biting into a juicy ripe tomato that one tenderly grows. This is an experience that anyone can attain and that can be made easier by the Backyard Farming Series. Becoming a gardener or farmer involves understanding the science of soil, the art of irrigation, and the larger relationship of our food to the environment.

This year, we held seven half-day workshops, all with a hands-on component. Participants planted garlic, installed drip irrigation,



constructed row covers, fermented vegetables, built wood burrowing bee houses, sharpened their tools, and pruned fruit trees. Further enriching this experience is the community of people that the workshops bring together.

Local experts generously share their knowledge while participants from diverse backgrounds offer their input so that everyone learns from each other. Many participants agree that this is a wonderful way to spend a Saturday afternoon and these workshops truly enable one to build their garden from the ground up.



This series is organized through a collaborative effort between Bernalillo County Open Space, the Bernalillo County Extension Office, Sunstone Herbs and Learning Center, and the Hubbell House Alliance.

Hubbell House Alliance



SUNSTONE HERBS



Building sustainable relationships with the earth.

Food Festival and Field Day

The Annual Food Festival and Field day just keeps getting bigger and better every year. This year an estimated 4,000 people came out to partake in New Mexico's local food movement. People learned how to grow, cook, buy and eat locally.

The amount of activities that filled the Gutierrez-Hubbell House and fields made one's head spin. Inside the house, authors were signing books while artists displayed eye catching paintings that made one's mouth water. Under the portal, UNM Sustainability Studies students featured research projects on sustainable food while guest presenters provided further instruction for those hungry to learn more. Out in the field vendors sold a variety of local goods while chefs demonstrated how to use those goods in delectable dishes that participants sampled. The fun continued with an entire area dedicated to kids complete with a climbing wall, petting zoo, face painting and food related competitions such as gummy worm compost.



This truly was the food event of the year, thanks to the Mid Region Council of Governments and numerous community partners.



Food for People Initiative



What happens when you mix together a cup of good intentions, a handful of resources, and a number of partners? Sometime they're the perfect ingredients for something wonderful. This is the case with the Food for People initiative

at the Gutierrez-Hubbell House. Bernalillo County Open Space, the Bernalillo County Extension Office, the Hubbell House Alliance, and Roadrunner Foodbank got together at the beginning of the year to entertain the idea of growing organic, fresh food for people in need, and it's working.

The Extension Office, who manages the Hubbell fields, solicited the help of AmeriCorps Volunteer Gabe Baker to grow food that is then donated to the Roadrunner Foodbank and widely distributed to a number of groups and individuals in need. Julie Anderson with the Foodbank

said that fresh produce is the first thing to go when people are selecting their food for the week. **This year, the Hubbell fields yielded 740 pounds of carrots, onions, potatoes, salad greens, peas, peppers and more.**

We hope this number grows in 2012 and are discussing hosting a distribution center at the Gutierrez-Hubbell House for other backyard farmers who want to contribute their excess harvest to the needy. If you are interested in participating in the project as a small farmer or gardener, contact the Open Space Coordinator.

Engaging Youth in Open Space

Junior Master Gardener Program

Imagine a group of kids, all different ages, swarming around doing a bee dance, making a tasty compost cake, or scavenging for stones representing water, sunlight and soil to thrive as a healthy plant. Sounds like fun, doesn't it? Kids involved in the Junior Master Gardener (JMG) Program led by John Garlisch with the Bernalillo County Extension Office are indeed having a blast.

This is the first year Mr. Garlisch has launched the program and it's a big hit. Youth from the Los Padillas Community Center and home school students go on weekly field trips to the Gutierrez-Hubbell House to learn all about the wonders of nature and growing food. After attending the course, they receive a certificate along with many memorable experiences. This program gets kids outdoors learning while also having fun.

What's more, an effort is being made to train other facilitators, including teachers, so that this program can touch many students' lives in both formal and informal educational settings. If you are interested in attending workshops on the JMG Program, contact the Open Space Coordinator.



RiverXchange



Those who live in an arid climate instinctively recognize that water is a precious resource, but don't always know how to conserve and protect it. That is why the grave importance of water to our lives and its cultural significance

to our communities is being taught to fifth-graders through real field experiences. This year, Open Space worked with RiverXchange staff to develop five field trips at Bernalillo County's Sanchez Farm property for 13 Albuquerque Public School classes. The field trips featured "stations" on the property led by representatives from the Master Naturalist Program, Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District, La Plazita Institute, and Ciudad Soil and Water Conservation District. They taught students about the science of acequia/ditch irrigation, the functions of a detention basin to help mitigate flooding, the benefits of wetlands in cleaning stormwater

runoff, as well as composting, tree planting and farming techniques. This was such a successful collaborative program that plans have been made to continue to engage RiverXchange students at Sanchez Farm, as well as at Bachechi Open Space in 2012.



Cesar Chavez and Wildlife Restoration

This year's "Sí Se Puede" award recipients, Maclovía Zamora and Benny Medina, delivered an empowering message to a large group of students at the 2nd Annual César Chávez Day of Service & Learning about the ability we all have to make the world a better place. They emphasized the past hardships of farming and the strides that have been made since César Chávez helped change working conditions for farm workers.

Mrs. Zamora and Mr. Medina's words, along with a number of other inspiring leaders, moved these children to appreciate the significance of the Day of Service, which was displayed by their focus

and dedication to their tasks. Students engaged in a number of farm related activities at the Sanchez Farm Open Space, including composting, planting, weeding, and sowing seeds. They also help to improve the wildlife habitat by planting over 200 trees and shrubs with help from the Open Space Land Management crew. They went away from the day having a deeper understanding of history, social issues and ecological connections for farming activities while achieving a sense of accomplishment that they made a difference on this particular Day of Service.

This annual event is organized by the Recuerda a César Chávez

Committee who works with hundreds of students of all ages by developing curriculum, leading classroom presentations, and providing valuable experiences that drive home some of César Chávez and Dolores Huerta's message of equality and justice for all.



Boy Scout Projects



The Boy Scout motto **Be Prepared** is further elaborated by the statement "Be prepared for life—to live happily and without regret, knowing that you have done your best." This is a motto that we can all live by and that the Boy Scouts displayed well this year with three different projects on Open Space.

Life Scout Christian Fitzgerald and Troop 505 reclaimed approximately 0.75 miles of user-created social trails at Ojito de San Antonio. This event served as Christian's Eagle Scout Leadership Service Project and was performed to encourage visitors to use designated trails and rehabilitate vegetation and wildlife habitat.

The second Eagle Scout project was led by James Johnston with help from Troop 97 who implemented innovative permaculture techniques by constructing berms and tree wells to help naturally harvest water and slow down soil erosion. He worked alongside Master Naturalist Lorelee



Makelee and local expert Christian Meuli. On September 17th, the Scouts worked so hard moving and finessing mounds of mulch into berms that even their teeth were covered in dirt by the end of the day. Lorelee captured this technique on film, and it will soon be posted on the Open Space website.

Third, Mason Fitzgerald worked with Troop 505 to create bird habitat in the



South Valley at Pajarito and the Gutierrez-Hubbell House properties on October 8th, 2011. Mason masterfully directed his troop and their families to mount birdhouses at just the right heights in the perfect spots after months of research. The Troop had a few hours left in the day, so they lent a helping hand by pulling invasive bindweed out of the Hubbell demonstration gardens.

There is no doubt that the process of attaining the Eagle Scout badge through these projects help to prepare these young men for life. The Open Space staff sincerely thanks these Eagle Scouts and their troops for contributing to the overall health of Open Space.

Green Fire and Leopold Legacy Film Competition

Leopold Legacy Film Competition



This years winning films were:

"What would Aldo Think?"

By Lisa Silva and Girls
Gone Green from East San Jose Elementary School

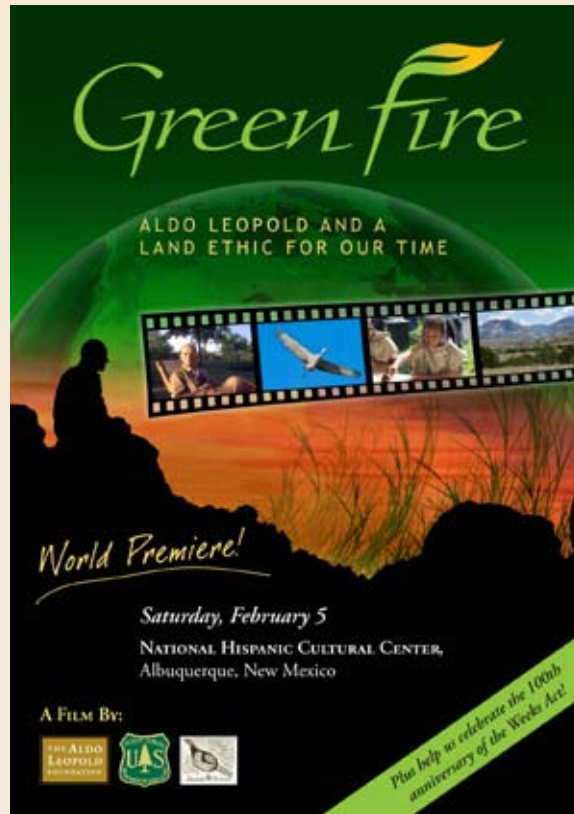
"Preserving Beauty: Eugene Simon My Environmental Hero"

By Elke Duerr

"That Which is Most Precious: La Fiesta de San Antonio"

By TJ Martinez

And special recognition went to local environmental hero, the late Clifford Crawford, with the film **"Remember Dr. Clifford Crawford."**



New Mexico was host to the world premier of "Green Fire: Aldo Leopold and a Land Ethic for Our Time," presented at the National Hispanic Cultural Center and sponsored by Bernalillo County Open Space. This documentary goes in-depth about how New Mexico helped to shape Aldo Leopold's land ethic that, in turn, shaped so many others during and after his time.

When pondering our own land ethic, all sorts of issues may come to mind including our daily actions and our community decisions that affect generations to come, and our global perspective on how we are all connected to each other. Leopold put it

so eloquently when he stated, "A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise."

While Aldo Leopold touched many lives with his insightful words, we have many environmental heroes whose voices go unsung today. In order to recognize these heroes, Bernalillo County Open Space, working with The Leopold Foundation, organized the Leopold Legacy Film Competition. All of the films, including the winning submissions, can be viewed at www.leopoldlegacyfilms.com. Among the local heroes honored through the film submissions and award ceremony were Chris Jinzo, Don Bustos, Joe Sage, Mike Richie, Gene Simon, and Zoe Wilcox-Eugene.



Community Stewardship and Citizen Scientists

Master Naturalist Program



Becoming a Master Naturalist is a lifelong endeavor. Exploring, contemplating, and discovering the natural world around us awakens a childlike excitement and develops a deep wisdom about our own place within this world. This

excitement and wisdom was expressed during the service project presentations by the first class of Master Naturalists. A wide range of projects were displayed from constructing berms for soil erosion control, inspiring others to appreciate the Rio Grande ecosystem through a nature guide, and researching bears and bees.

Although this is a young program in our state, only in its second pilot year, it has already created a sense of community of nature lovers. This summer, the second class completed an intensive 55 hour training and are now engaged in their service projects. Many of the Master Naturalist Interns are helping to further develop Bachechi Open Space's potential by studying and creating lesson plans on the ecology of the property. Other interns are working at the Rio Grande Nature Center and Sandia Mountain Natural History Center. No matter what the interns are doing, they are all engaged in the ecological and human community through education, restoration, and research.

For those interested in becoming part of this program, applications will be accepted in April for the summer 2012 training.



Master Naturalist Program Mission Statement

The Bernalillo County Open Space Master Naturalist Program aims to instill the pursuit of life-long learning and promote environmental stewardship. Participants are activity engaged through education and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources on Open Space properties.



East Mountain Interpretive Series



The East Mountains are full of hidden treasures, enchanting stories, rich history, and lush coves of wilderness. The Interpretive Series exposes some of these extraordinary morsels, but only enough to want more. At Sabino Canyon, participants learned about the complex history of land grants and family connections that still persist today. At Ojito de San Antonio they were reminded about the importance of water in an arid landscape and how it has shaped



communities in the past and present. Additionally, they explored the wonders of the plant community by discovering which are edible and which are medicinal. They also stepped in the tracks of bears and explored their sparse diets this year by investigating their scat. The speakers of each of these sessions gave freely of their time to pass on their wisdom and knowledge to those who were willing to spend a Saturday afternoon listening.

East Mountain High School Engaged in Citizen Science



East Mountain High School students continue to play an integral role in natural resource management at Ojito de San Antonio, as was eloquently displayed during this past year's youth presentations on March 24th. Five small student groups presented the following projects to the general public: ongoing water quality monitoring; vegetation transect studies and creation of a plant identification booklet; cultural studies and a mural design; fruit tree grafting and orchard restoration; and bear research and creation of a brochure titled Bear Aware. During the evening's event, participants had an additional treat with a short presentation from film director TJ Martinez and Professor Enrique La Madrid followed by the screening of "That Which is Most Precious: A Fiesta de San Antonio, NM."

Dia Del Rio at Durand Open Space

Bernalillo County and City of Albuquerque Open Space teamed up for Dia Del Rio on October 15, 2011. This annual event engages volunteers all along the Rio Grande and its tributaries to celebrate the beauty and power of the river while participating in active stewardship of this vital resource. During the event, hosted at Durand Open Space, over 70 volunteers constructed a quarter-mile trail that now goes from the property to the river, cleaned up the over 50 bags of trash in the Bosque, and planted 100 native shrubs and trees.



Major Improvements and Accomplishments at Open Space

Bachechi Grand Opening and Interpretive Signs

On November 15, 2011 Bernalillo County dedicated the Bachechi Open Space with a ribbon cutting event attended by local dignitaries, elected officials, agency representatives, County staff, project designers, and community members. This event culminated a process that took over three years to master plan, solicit public input, coordinate with local agencies, prepare detailed construction plans, bid, and construct.

This challenging project successfully achieved a seamless integration with the adjacent City of Albuquerque's Alameda Open Space by expanding and improving parking facilities, developing additional trails, and constructing wildlife viewing blinds and equestrian facilities. Integration of existing vegetation, particularly in

the Northstar Arboretum, with new xeric vegetation and non-potable irrigation represented a project theme of combining older features of the site with new features.

Beautifully illustrated, well-researched, and succinct interpretive signs have been installed throughout the site and focus on topics such as acequias, pollinators, composting, wetland wildlife, and the pecan orchard. There are a total of 15 large and 10 small interpretive signs and five wayfinding signs.

The Environmental Education building will serve as a base of operations for the Master Naturalist Program, now entering its third year, as well as for free events and activities for the general public and students.



Gutierrez-Hubbell House Exhibit Master Plan

Bernalillo County, the Hubbell House Alliance, and Sightworks have collaborated on an Exhibit Master Plan for the Gutierrez-Hubbell House. This plan will serve as a guide for synthesizing and implementing a quality, multi-faceted array of exhibits that will engage visitors of all ages and backgrounds to learn about the history, culture, architecture, environment, and significance of the Gutierrez-Hubbell House, family, property and area. The Exhibit Master Plan aligns the best features of the house, the land, revenue-generating potential, and future acquisitions and exhibits into a cohesive, attractive, historical, informative and educational packages. Public input from Pajarito-area interests was also solicited in preparing the plan. Both Bernalillo County and the Hubbell House Alliance have programmatic objectives that will be aided by this plan and its subsequent implementation. Phase 2 of this planning effort will begin in early 2012 with the research and detailed design of exhibits, while Phase 3 will follow later in 2012 and into 2013 with procuring bids for the actual construction and installation of exhibits.



Additional Property Highlights

East Mountain Properties:



Ojito de San Antonio Open Space

During much of this year, Ojito de San Antonio was closed to the public due to seasonal bear closures, construction to install an irrigation system in the orchard area, and fire closures that affected the entire area. Despite these closures, citizen scientists who are working with Open Space staff (including Master Naturalists and East Mountain High School students) continued their research and two major Boy Scout projects were completed. Additionally, two interpretive walks took place on the property. Next year we intend to complete an interpretive guide and will be working with the State Forestry Office to complete a prescription for a future fuel thinning project with the Ciudad Soil and Water Conservation District.



Sabino Canyon Open Space

Professor LM Garcia y Griego led a fascinating interpretive walk on land grants in the area. Southwest style benches and picnic tables have been purchased for the property and will be installed in early 2012.



Sedillo Ridge Open Space

In 2012, Bernalillo County Open Space will complete archaeological and biological surveys at the Sedillo Ridge Open Space. This environmental research will inform future forest thinning and trail construction efforts.



Carlito Springs Open Space

This year we hosted an Open House at Carlito Springs and invited the public to tour the property and structures while presenting future plans for the site. Currently, we are conducting a Cultural Landscape Assessment that will help direct Open Space staff on using best management practices for managing and opening the property in a sustainable and responsible manner with maintaining the protection of the cultural and natural resources as a top priority. Analysis of architectural conditions or structures and the water supply will determine how the County proceeds with improvements at Carlito Springs.



Valley Properties:



Pajarito Open Space

In the spring of 2011, BCOS constructed an additional 0.45 miles of crusher fine trail at the Pajarito Open Space, completing perimeter trails around the north and middle fields. There is now one-mile of trail at the Pajarito Open Space open to non-motorized uses. Additionally, Open Space staff worked with the Pajarito Neighborhood Association to organize an Apples and Art event that encouraged the local community and youth to eat healthy and exercise. A new farming contract with a to-be-determined farmer will be set up for the 2012-2015 time period.



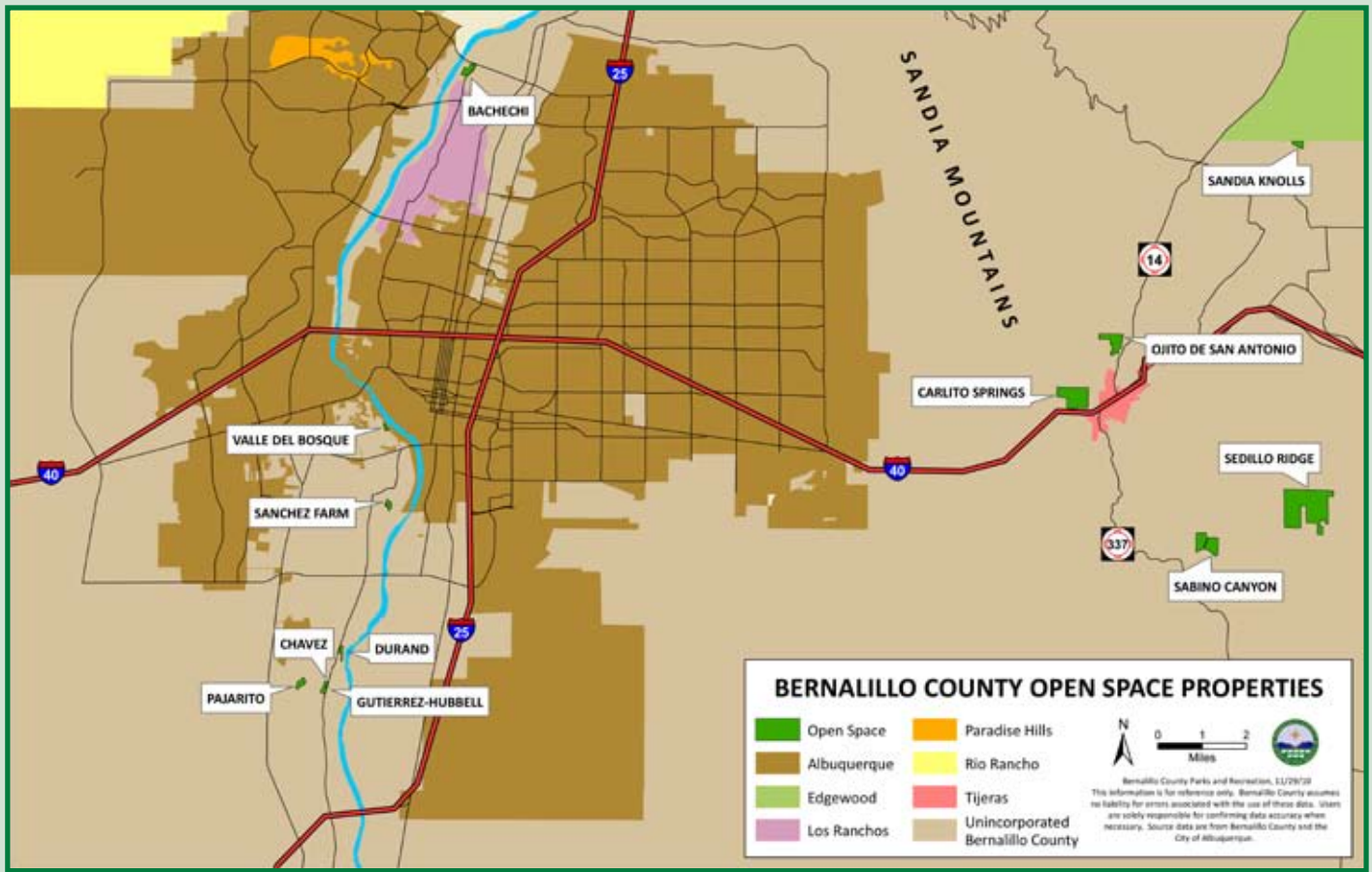
Durand Open Space

This year, the Albuquerque Metropolitan Arroyo Flood Control Authority (AMAFCA) and the Corps of Engineers completed construction of a large drainage channel on the north side of the property as part of a larger effort to mitigate flooding in the South Valley. The trail and parking area were re-established after the construction, and Open Space staff along with partnering agencies presented the new channel and work at the South Valley's Neighborhood Night Out. A new farming contract with a to-be-determined farmer will be set up for the 2012-2015 time period. Also, a new interpretive kiosk will be developed in 2012 that will highlight the site history, AMAFCA Corps project, and other site features.



Sanchez Farm Open Space

Sanchez Farm was initially purchased by Bernalillo County Public Works to serve as a drainage facility for stormwater runoff, and this still remains the property's primary function. However, farming, wildlife habitat and education are continuing to evolve at the property, mainly through Open Space's partnership with La Plazita Institute (LPI). To better serve these secondary functions, Open Space staff, working with contractors and LPI has developed a comprehensive site plan that includes lighting, signage, parking, soil improvements, an outdoor classroom and more. Much of 2012 will be focused on implementing phases of the plan.



Moving into 2012, Bernalillo County Open Space will continue to build on what has been established this past two years, as well as create some new opportunities. We will continue to collaborate with our local partners to offer a new series of Backyard Farming Workshops and East Mountain Interpretive walks, but we will also include a new Naturalist Series at Bachechi Open Space. Also, the Master Naturalist Program will continue and the Advisory Committee will support efforts for the program to go statewide. Additionally, there will be special emphasis this year on workshops and events that celebrate New Mexico's centennial by highlighting our state's rich history and culture. These events will all be listed on the Open Space website by the end of January 2012, so stay tuned and get involved in your local Open Space.

A Word from Land Management

If there are any concerns that may be a maintenance issue at any Open Space property, please contact us at 505-224-2119. Each call will be evaluated and put into our work order system. If you experience a public safety concern, call the County Sheriff's Office at 505-468-7100. For emergencies, call 911.



Dog waste is the second largest source of fecal coliform pollution in the Rio Grande.

Today, many of us get a percentage of our drinking water from the Rio Grande. Do your part to keep our water clean by picking up after your dogs.



**Please Pick Up
After Your Dog!**



Tom Zdunek, **County Manager**

Bernalillo County Parks and Recreation Department:

Ed Chismar, **Director**

Clay Campbell, **Planning Manager**

Mark Chavez, **Land Management Section Manager**

Colleen McRoberts, **Open Space Coordinator**

Grant Brodehl, **Park, Open Space, and Trail Planner**

Manuel Griego, **Construction Project Manager**

Ed Martinez, **Open Space Crew Supervisor**

www.bernco.gov/openspace