

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose

This Resource Management Plan (RMP) for *Ojito de San Antonio* Open Space (Ojito) identifies specific management objectives and strategies that will help preserve its unique historic and cultural character, protect its abundant natural resources, and offer limited, resource-based recreational opportunities. These objectives and strategies are consistent with the natural and cultural resource issues that have been identified by the public and the technical team throughout the planning process. The objectives and strategies contained herein were developed by the East Mountain Open Space Steering Committee through extensive community participation and a consensus-based planning approach. Most importantly, this is a *working* document that describes the site's complexity and provides guidance for future management and use based on a number of regional, higher-ranking plans.

B. General Property Information

Bernalillo County (County) purchased Ojito in December of 1999 with mill levy funds from a 1998 referendum that approved one-half mill for Open Space purchases. The County's Parks and Recreation Department owns and manages the property.

Ojito is located on the eastern face of the Sandia Mountain Range, north of Interstate 40, two miles north of Tijeras Village and approximately 20 miles east of Albuquerque. The Cibola National Forest borders the property along its northern and western boundaries; the southern and eastern boundaries abut private residential development. It comprises 88 acres and ranges in elevation between 6,600 to 6,800 feet above sea level.

Ojito takes its name from two permanent springs that run through the property. These springs have supported indigenous settlements and more contemporary communities since 1200 A.D. (Monk 1998). They have created a rich riparian environment that nourishes an heirloom orchard planted during the Spanish colonial period. This water source also provides critical habitat for many different species of birds and animals, including black bear, mountain lion, badger, and mule deer while serving as a source of potable water for the Village of San Antonio (Crowley 2002).

The only known *structures* on the property include a foundation from a house that burned to the ground in the 1970s and an ancient *acequia* system owned and maintained by the *Acequia Madre de San Antonio* Community Ditch Association (Acequia Association), a legal entity recognized by the State of New Mexico and Bernalillo County. The property has a long history of human habitation as well as dry land and irrigated farming. Section III, History and Culture, includes a more detailed description of the property's historic and cultural highlights.

C. Legal Description

The site is located in Bernalillo County; Zone Atlas Volume 2, pages H-28, and H-29. The property is zoned A-2, rural residential and is undeveloped. The property includes two different parcels. The parcels listed below comprise the 88-acre property.

The legal description is entitled "Lands of William and Sharon Gross"; that certain parcel of land is situated within Sections 10 and 11, Township 10 North, Range 5 East, New Mexico Principal Meridian, Bernalillo County, New Mexico, comprising the North half of the Northeast Quarter of the Southeast Quarter (N1/2 NE1/4 SE1/4) of said Section 10 and Government lots 13, 14, 17, and 18 and Private Claim No. 4464 Tract 3 and that portion of Private Claim No. 4464 Tract 2 lying within the Southwest Quarter of said Section 11, filed February 1994.

A vicinity map showing Ojito's location in relation to the other East Mountain Open Space properties is provided on the following page.

D. East Mountain Open Space (EMOS) Planning Process

In the fall of 2001, the County applied for and received a technical assistance grant from the Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA) of the National Park Service to support the County's efforts in developing RMPs for the recently acquired East Mountain Open

Space properties. Recognizing the benefits of partnership planning, the City of Albuquerque Open Space Division and the U.S. Forest Service, Sandia Ranger District, joined the East Mountain Open Space planning process.

The National Park Service facilitated a community-based planning process that made concerted efforts to involve all East Mountain residents in Open Space management discussions. Key planning steps included:

- Forming a steering committee with individuals representing adjacent neighborhoods, land grant associations, trail users, wildlife interests, youth groups, educators, East Mountain Historical Society members, East Mountain Garden Club members, and land management agencies.
- Organizing familiarization tours of each property to better understand site issues, unique values and characteristics, and management opportunities.

Map 1. East Mountain Open Space Vicinity Map

- Establishing an *East Mountain Open Space Vision*; organizational mission, and resource management goals.
- Understanding critical issues and concerns related to natural, historical and cultural resource protection, public use, and adjacent lands.
- Developing site knowledge through trail construction training, fuel load reduction workshops, Global Positioning System (GPS) mapping of property features, Youth Conservation Corps site restoration work, and Talking Talons Youth Leadership environmental education and research.
- Conducting community outreach through neighborhood meetings, additional site visits, and newspaper feature articles.
- Organizing and hosting community design *charette* workshop to consider appropriate uses, facilities, and site design elements.
- Developing RMP with the assistance and support of East Mountain residents.

I

i. East Mountain Open Space Steering Committee

Early in the process, citizens endorsed the idea of establishing a project steering committee. Individuals volunteered to serve on the East Mountain Open Space Steering Committee (Steering Committee) to help develop RMPs for each property. Committee members represented neighborhood associations, recreational trail users, adjacent landowners, wildlife interests, forest health, land grant associations, *acequia* organizations, young adults, educators, local media, and regional land management agencies. The key roles and responsibilities of the Steering Committee included:

- Understanding the concerns and desires of the local community regarding Open Space management.
- Serving as local ambassadors for the project.
- Promoting the values of partnership planning and consensus building.

- Becoming familiar with the issues, concerns, and resources at all of the Open Space properties.
- Leading community outreach and public involvement activities.
- Agreeing to work with others who may have different opinions.
- Assist the technical team by organizing meetings, site visits, events, and other community involvement activities.
- Reviewing, developing, and commenting on planning documents.

Each Open Space property was represented by a subcommittee that organized neighborhood meetings, conducted community outreach activities, attended site visits, and developed issues and opportunities statements associated with each site.

ii. Public Meetings

In addition to monthly Steering Committee meetings (that were open to the public), the County also met with neighborhood and special interest groups regarding Ojito and participated in East Mountain area events. These meetings and events are listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Public Outreach.

Meeting Type/Location	Property	Date	Attendance
East Mountain Pride Day/Vista Grande Community Center	All Properties	April 29, 2003	Event booth
Neighborhood: Canyon Estates /Wells Fargo Bank	Carlito Springs	May 22, 2003	10
Blessing of the Spring/ Onsite	Ojito de San Antonio	May 7, 2003	Event booth
Neighborhood/ Onsite Tour	Carlito Springs	July 22, 2003	
East Mountain Discovery Days/ Sandia Ski Area	All Properties	July 26, 2003	Event booth
Neighborhood/ Resident Home	Sedillo Ridge	July 10, 2003	22
Neighborhood/ Cedro Campground	Sabino Canyon	Sept. 7,2003	15
Design Charette/Tijeras Ranger District	All properties	Nov. 19, 2003	50
East Mountain Pride Day	All properties	April 25, 2004	Event booth
San Antonio Acequia Association	Ojito	Nov. 16, 2004	5
San Antonio Acequia Association and the Office of the State Engineer	Ojito	Dec. 15, 2004	14

E. Relevant Plans

General goals and policies for County Open Space properties were identified in four higher-ranking plans. Those plans are the Albuquerque/Bernalillo Comprehensive Plan (1988), Major Public Open Space Facility Plan (1999), East Mountain Area Plan (1992), and the Bernalillo County Parks, Open Space, Trails Master Plan (2003). Additional related land management strategies may be found in the Cibola National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan produced by the United States Forest Service as amended in 1990 and 1996 (USFS).

i. Albuquerque/Bernalillo Comprehensive Plan (Comprehensive Plan), 1988.

The Comprehensive Plan gives broad direction for Open Space acquisition. Ojito was acquired because it meets many of the purposes outlined in the Comprehensive Plan. The site conserves natural resources and environmental features, preserves archaeological resources, and provides for outdoor recreation and education opportunities.

ii. Major Public Open Space Facility Plan (MPOS), 1999.

The MPOS is more specific than the Comprehensive Plan and was adopted by the County in 1999. The MPOS is the primary policy document for Open Space management. It establishes policies for many of the natural resource management issues and visitor use. The MPOS categorizes Open Space properties and their associated uses into several categories. **Ojito is defined as an *Open Space Preserve* because it contains existing structures—an ancient *acequia* system and a house foundation—has limited parking, and because visitor access will require management to protect the *acequia*, plant, and wildlife resources.** [See Appendix A, Permissive and Conditional Uses in Major Public Open Space from the MPOS, for additional information regarding the designation of public open space properties.]

iii. East Mountain Area Plan (EMAP), 1992

The EMAP provides direction specific to East Mountain Open Space conditions and goals. It also identifies priority acquisition areas in the East Mountains. The EMAP gives specific policy recommendations in two areas: (i) a mandate for the County to work with the USFS and City of Albuquerque (City) on joint projects, and (ii) a mandate to develop interpretive signage that

explains historic, natural, and archaeological features along rural and scenic roadways in the East Mountain area. The EMAP is currently being updated by County Planning staff and East Mountain residents.



Meadow views at Ojito de San Antonio Open Space



iv. Bernalillo County Parks, Open Space, Trails Master Plan (POST), 2003

The POST is the most recent plan completed by the County's Park and Recreation Division. It articulates the County's goals and objectives for its Open Space program. In addition to providing vision and mission statements for the program, the POST also delineates action items for County Open Space properties, including Ojito. A sampling of pertinent OSAC goals and objectives from the POST follow:

- *OSAC Goal 4: Develop management plans for BCOS properties that conserve and enhance natural and cultural resources while providing opportunities for public education and recreation.*
- *OSAC Goal 5: Preserve and enhance water resources on BCOS properties.*
- *OSAC Goal 7: Form partnerships with agencies and community organizations to build BCOS capacity for land management.*

v. Cibola National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (as amended 1990 and 1996)

Ojito abuts the Sandia Mountain Wilderness Area along Ojito's western and northern boundaries. Because of this proximity to federal land, the Cibola National Forest Land and Forest Resources Management Plan may outline beneficial resource management strategies applicable to Ojito. It is mentioned here as a reference and guide for future decision-making at the site. The shared boundary presents numerous challenges and opportunities for planned use and management.

F. Guiding Principles for all East Mountain Open Space Properties

The Steering Committee has developed the following list of guiding principles for all nine Open Space properties. These guiding principles were developed to establish a fundamental level of consistency among the EMOS sites leading to a more seamless visitor experience.

i. Site Improvements

Design and install appropriate site improvements such as boundary fences, trails, and other improvements that will support a quality visitor experience while maintaining the undeveloped character of an Open Space property.

ii. Natural and Cultural Features

Protect and enhance significant natural and cultural features by protecting existing ecosystems and developing strategies to minimize damage, protect riparian areas, revegetate disturbed areas, and minimize the risk of fires.

iii. Recreational Activities

Safely accommodate shared uses by supporting diverse recreational activities such as hiking, mountain biking and equestrian, and educational activities while minimizing user conflicts and other safety hazards.

iv. Educational Opportunities

Provide diverse educational opportunities to a variety of Open Space visitors.

v. Landowner Cooperation

Cooperate with adjacent landowners/managers to minimize negative impacts and promote opportunities for interagency collaboration.

vi. Long-term Stewardship

Sustain long-term stewardship by developing management partnerships and funding strategies that address property needs.

II. EXISTING CONDITIONS

A. Climate

Temperatures within the region range from an average low of 10 degrees Fahrenheit (F) in January to 90 degrees (F) in July and August. Temperature extremes vary from -27 degrees (F) to a high of 99 degrees (F).

B. Geology

The bedrock types within the area include sandstone, claystone, and shale. The New Mexico Bureau of Mines and Mineral Resources Memoir 29 notes that the site lies east of the Tijeras Fault (Kelley 1977). Geology at the site is typical of the East Mountain area.

C. Topography

Site elevation ranges from 6,600 to 6,800 feet above sea level. Slope conditions vary widely throughout the property.

D. Soil Conditions

Soil types at Ojito include soils from the Rock outcrop and Carlito series. Soil information specific to Ojito follows:

i. RCE: Rock outcrop-Bond complex

This soil consists of approximately 40 percent Rock outcrop and 30 percent Bond stony sandy loam that is typically located in areas that range between 5 to 35 percent slope. Rock