Greetings!

Hello to Bernalillo County Open Space supporters, partners, and friends! Hopefully this message finds you in good health and spirits. The purpose of this newsletter is to provide connection during the current COVID-19 public health crisis by bringing you facts and information about and around our open space properties. Now, more than ever we are reminded how interconnected we are and how the choices we make can impact others.

As you are likely aware, concern over the spread of the current coronavirus outbreak has resulted in closure of offices and facilities throughout Bernalillo County. It is imperative that we all do our part to keep our community safe and stop the spread of the virus. For more information coronavirus response, see the County’s webpage: https://www.bernco.gov/coronavirus

Precautions to Keep in Mind

- Buildings, restrooms, and playgrounds are closed
- Keep outdoor group sizes at 5 or fewer
- Stay 6 feet away from others
- Avoid unnecessary outside activity
- Stay home when sick
- Be mindful and courteous of others passing on the trail
- Minimize litter and animal waste left at sites by keeping a pack in-pack out mentality
- There are more people on sites and fewer staff to care for the grounds and properties, please do your part to ensure everyone can enjoy these open spaces.
**Primer Agua**

While many parts of our community are shutting down and ceasing operations during the health crisis, one sector remains active in providing an essential service to our community: the farmers and food supply chain workers in the middle Rio Grande valley. Supporting local agriculture is a priority for the county’s Open Space program and that continues this week as our Grow the Growers participants were busy amending soil, planting seeds, and irrigating the fields at the Gutiérrez-Hubbell House.

Last week we received our first share of water from the MRGCD and community-managed acequias. These irrigation ditches and canals bring water to support agricultural practices in the valley and like the veins which carry life-giving blood throughout our body, the acequias bring the water needed to nourish our fields and feed our communities.

Preserving these systems is crucial to ensuring that farmers, ranchers and community gardens can continue to support the local food system and maintain our county’s historic and cultural resources.

**#NMcounts:**

**It’s Time for The Census!**

The 2020 Census is open for self-response online at [2020Census.gov](http://2020Census.gov) or over the phone by calling the number provided in your invitation, and by paper through the mail. If you did not receive an invitation in the mail, you can still fill out the census online, helping ensure an accurate count for our community. Simply look below the login button for the link labeled “If you do not have a Census ID, click here.”

**“Food is the Matter**

**Water is the Matter”**

- Sumerian Proverb

**Acequias**

Pajarito Acequia Madre

The *acequia* that runs the entire length of the west end of the Hubbell Open Space property irrigates the Gutiérrez-Hubbell House and Hubbell Ranch House fields. This ditch, the Pajarito *acequia madre* or primary channel, was hand-dug by the Gutiérrez family and laborers on site in the early 1900s.
Irrigation History

What do you know about the ancient and ingenious system of water transfer still widely used throughout New Mexico today?

Communal systems to govern agricultural access to water are as old as agriculture itself (Tamburrino 2010; Wilkinson et al., 2015). Our *acequia* system has roots in the Middle East, home of some of earliest farming in the world. The ideas were brought to Spain by the Moors and were part of the agricultural technologies Spanish colonizers brought with them to the region (Rivera and Glick 2002). Meanwhile, generations of Pueblo farmers had developed their own varied, locally-adapted high-yield agricultural systems along the Rio Grande (Anschuetz 1995; Cordell and McBrinn 2012; Grieser and Moore 1995). The *acequia* system we use today makes use of the wisdom of both of these ancient irrigation models and incorporates additional innovations from hundreds of years of *mayordomos* (elected *acequia* officials) and *parciantes* (*acequia* system members) (see Rodríguez 2006).

The walking trail along the Pajarito acequia madre is open and the ditch is running. Get outside and enjoy the new signs of spring in recently irrigated fields!

Interested in *acequia* history?

Dive deep with these:

**Ancient Traditions Keep Desert Waters Flowing** by Arturo Sandoval  
*The History of the Acequia*

**Acequias: Interviews Archived by the Smithsonian**  
(audio)

Learn more about local water rights and use from  
**CESOSS** (Center for Social Sustainable Systems)  
**NM Acequia Association** and their “El Agua es Vida”

Reading List

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We would love to feature photographs you’ve taken of Bernalillo County Open Spaces. Please email your pictures to openspace@bernco.gov with the subject line “Open Space Photo Submission” in order to be considered.

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References

- Rodríguez, S 2006 - Acequia: Water, Sharing, Sanctity, and Place. School for Advanced Research, Santa Fe.