

OPEN SPACE ALLIANCE

Annual Report 2011

The Goals of the Open Space Alliance for 2011 are as follows.

1. To increase our membership to 300
2. To identify benefits of membership
3. To raise funds to put back into Open Space: \$5000 from corporate sources and \$3000 from individuals, independent of membership.
4. To spend down Restrictive Funds
5. To develop a calendar for 2011
6. To establish a Nominating Committee as a Standing Committee.

The Open Space Alliance Annual Membership Meeting of 2011 was held in May. The Nominating Committee presented a slate of individuals to serve a two-year term on the Open Space Alliance Board of Directors. Those nominated for a first two-year term were H. Barker, Steve Glass, Clare Stevens, and Criss Swaim. All four were elected. They join the others listed at the end of this report to make the complete board roster. Nineteen people were in attendance at the Annual Meeting.

Matt Schmader, Open Space Superintendent, presented a fascinating powerpoint on Francisco Vasquez de Coronado, one of the Spanish conquistadors whose legend has him coming through the Albuquerque area in the 1600s. It also showed artifacts discovered and traced to Piedras Mercadas. The meeting concluded with a walking tour of Piedras Mercadas Pueblo Ruin, an unexcavated ruin to the north of the Visitor Center.

The Alliance continued to grow our outreach to the community, as more opportunities for OSA to table at public events became apparent. One of our valued volunteers, Barbara Eberhardt, built a storyboard for us to use in educating people about OSA. In particular, the OSA was present in the community at the Aldo Leopold Green Fire conference, the Burque Bioneers Conference, and the NM Xeriscape Conference. We have responded to requests for speakers about OSA. The Alliance has also created new ways to draw members. Membership in the Alliance grew with 35 new members and 55 renewing members. The active membership roster is 127 (including members back to 4thQ 2010). Other activities include a board retreat to identify our 2012 Goals. The Memorial Policy of Major Open Space has received a review and an update.

The OSA has partnered with Burque Bioneers. We acted as the fiscal agent for the first BB Conference, a satellite conference of Bioneers San Rafael, CA. There were educational films about the earth and its stewardship. Preservation of the natural environment is a stated part the OSA Mission Statement. Workshops were conducted around the themes raised by the films. In addition, 180 high school students took their youthful energy to Bosque cleanup and tree planting.

The Alliance sponsors some events organized by the Open Space Division (OSD). In summer, we support the Summer Series, musical and educational Saturday evenings at the Elena Gallegos Amphitheatre. There are also hikes planned every Sunday. In addition, OSA received a corporate grant for a program we used to call *Get On The Bus*, but now call *Get Into Open Space* (GIOS). The idea is to get children out of the classroom and into nature. OSA support provides bus transport for a classroom teacher to take his/her students to an open space area. With guided help, the students learn to value the environment and be a volunteer. This year, 400 students and adults gave almost 1600 volunteer hours to planting trees, trash removal, trail restoration, and caging cottonwood trees through GIOS.

The Alliance also provides education and support to OSD events. For example, Foothills Cleanup occurs every Saturday in April. The large-scale cleanups yielded 700 pounds of trash and recyclables plus 650 pounds of dog waste. Over 2 miles of trail were improved and maintained, about 1/10 of a mile of new trail was built. The 175 adult and 104 youth volunteers included Boy Scout groups, churches, and citizens of all ages.

National River Cleanup occurs in May. A total of 121 volunteers picked up enough trash (about 2,640 pounds) to fill approximately 124 trash bags. Large items included tires, plastic tarps, five shopping carts, even car parts. The active and motivated recycling crew generated five full recycling bags of smashed #1 and #2 plastic, two full recycling bags of aluminum cans, two bags of unbroken and uncontaminated glass bottles, and several bundles of broken-down and uncontaminated corrugated cardboard.

National Trails Day, an annual event in June, is the most important celebration of trails in the USA. In Albuquerque, 120 volunteers participated in 13 projects throughout the Foothills and nearby Sandia Mountain Wilderness.

Dia del Rio, occurring in October, brought out 70 volunteers to honor one of New Mexico's most precious natural resources, the Rio Grande River. Partnering with Bernalillo County Open Space, the Army Corps of Engineers, the OSD and volunteers collected 50 bags of trash, 5 bags of recycling, created ¼ mile of new naturally surfaced trail and performed maintenance on an additional ¼ mile of trail, planted 100 native shrubs in a wetland and in a disturbed area of the bosque, and installed 2 new regulation signs for the Rio Grande Valley State Park.

At the Visitor Center, the OSA works on the Recycled Art Fair in spring, the Urban Farm Fest in the fall, and the Crane Festival in November. Throughout the year there are revolving art displays in the gallery and films on public lands upon request. Each year a display is set up during Dia de las Muertas. This gives the OSD the opportunity to commemorate those people who have made their positive mark on open space. A new initiative has emerged in the development of a gift shop at the Open Space Visitor Center (OSVC).

The 6th Annual Art Exhibit and Sale, *Open Space: A Room with a View* was held in September and October. OSA works with Plein Air artists and OSVC staff to plan and

execute the show. The walls of the OSVC light up with the hanging of beautiful Little Gems, art miniatures, and the walls of the gallery invite one to linger a while. The sale of paintings generated \$1,216 for the OSA.

Our donors have been generous this year with \$4,298.00.

The Alliance is especially grateful for the many hours of volunteer time put in by board members. Of special note are two volunteers who are not board members but are invaluable in our work for open space, Barbara Eberhardt and Barbara Kleinfeld,

Steven Hamp, President for the first six months of 2011

Sallie McCarthy, President for the last six months of 2011.

Board of Directors

*Mailing address: PO Box 91265
ABQ NM 87199*

Sallie McCarthy, President

Jack Clifford, Vice-President

Steve Glass, Secretary

Elizabeth Young, Treasurer

H Barker

Steven Hamp

Kelly Hennessey, REI liaison

Jodi Hedderig, ex officio

Criss Swaim