



Open Space Alliance Newsletter, May 2024



Photo © Brandt Magic

## What's Happening in Space (ABQ Open Space)?

Welcome to the first of our new set of newsletters!... and to **our new website**, [openspacealliance.org](https://openspacealliance.org)

We are pleased to help keep you up to date on what's happening in Albuquerque's abundant open space, let you know about some of the less visited parts of it, introduce you to the members of the City's Open Space Division of the Parks and Recreation Department, give you a chance to tell us what you think of their efforts and ours – all in the space of 3 to no more than 5 pages appearing in your email mailbox every odd-numbered month. Have a peek! And please let us know what you think of the newsletter, and what else you'd like to see in it! Please send any comments or thoughts to us at our website, <http://openspacealliance.org>. Thanks for staying in touch!

**OSA Mission:** OSA will enhance the experiences of all users of Albuquerque Open Space lands by providing financial support for Open Space programs; by advocating for sustainability and expansion of Open Space programs; and by encouraging increased public involvement with and use of Open Space lands.

# Colleen McRoberts, Albuquerque's First Female Open Space Superintendent



Where is Colleen riding?

Answer on page 4.

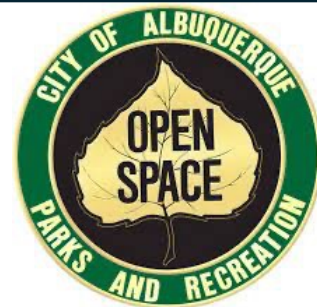
Hint: Go east, young (wo)man!

During the past 18 years, Albuquerque Open Space Superintendent Colleen McRoberts has served communities throughout the country and the world in conservation education and natural resource management for not-for-profit and government agencies. Her passion is community development and connecting people of all ages and backgrounds to nature.

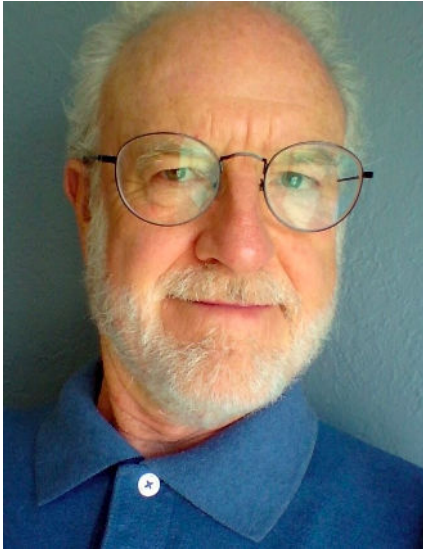
Colleen received a Bachelor of Science from the Department of Education at the University of New Mexico in 1999 and a Master's degree in Environmental Education through UNM's Master's International Program. She served as a U.S. Peace Corps Volunteer for three years in the Republic of Philippines. Following the Peace Corps, Colleen worked as a research assistant for the World Wildlife Fund and then as the Growing Native Program Director at Potomac Conservancy in the Washington, D.C. area.

More recently, Ms. McRoberts served as the Open Space Coordinator for Bernalillo County for more than 10 years. During her tenure, she developed an award-winning Open Space Program from the ground up through community and partnership support. She launched the first Master Naturalist program in New Mexico, developed annual public events and programs, managed outreach opportunities for youth, oversaw natural resource projects, and created interpretive materials. She also served as a spokeswoman for Open Space, helping to secure a 15-year mill levy.

Since her teen years, she has been hiking and mountain biking at Open Space properties, where she finds profound solace, joy, and wonderment.



# Steve Glass, Long-Time Board Chair, Open Space Alliance



Steve Glass has been a member of the Open Space Alliance for 14 years and its president for ten (he also serves as OSA's current treasurer). He is pleased that OSA and his other board, the Ciudad Soil and Water Conservation District, both interact with Albuquerque's Open Space Division. Steve holds an MS in Environmental Science from NMSU and has 45 years of experience in natural resources protection. As a retired municipal wastewater biosolids composting and stormwater management programs manager, and the former local government representative on the NM Water Quality Control Commission (2003-2013), he is familiar with a wide range of natural resource and conservation issues.

## Exciting Coming events at the Open Space Visitor Center

May 4 - **Bosque Wild Guided Hike** -  
May 4 - **Poets Picnic**  
May 4 - **Edible and Medicinal Plant walk  
with Dara Seville**  
May 4 - **Gallery Opening Reception**- Artist-  
Susan Roden  
May 11 - **Gallery Opening Reception**- Artist-  
4-Common Corners  
May 11 - **Sunset Concert** with The Chill  
House Band and Hillary Smith  
May 18 - **A Collage Postcard Workshop  
with- 4 Common Corners**  
May 22 - **Workshop: Soft Pastels + the  
Sandia Foothills with Susan Roden**  
June 1 - **Sunset Concert**  
June 8 - **Bosque Wild Guided Hike** -  
June 8 - **Juneteenth Celebration**  
June 22 - **Pollinator Celebration**  
June 29 - **International Mud Day**

A Distinguished Faculty instructor in biology and environmental science at Central New Mexico Community College, he was named recipient of the Environmental Education Association of New Mexico's 2016 Becker Award of Excellence in Environmental Education.

He is proud of facilitating an on-going collaboration with the city Open Space Division; together OSA and OSD have supported many great programs. "I'm proud and gratified at the long-term support we've given OSD, he says, including a recent, on-going redesign of signage for Major Public Open Space properties .

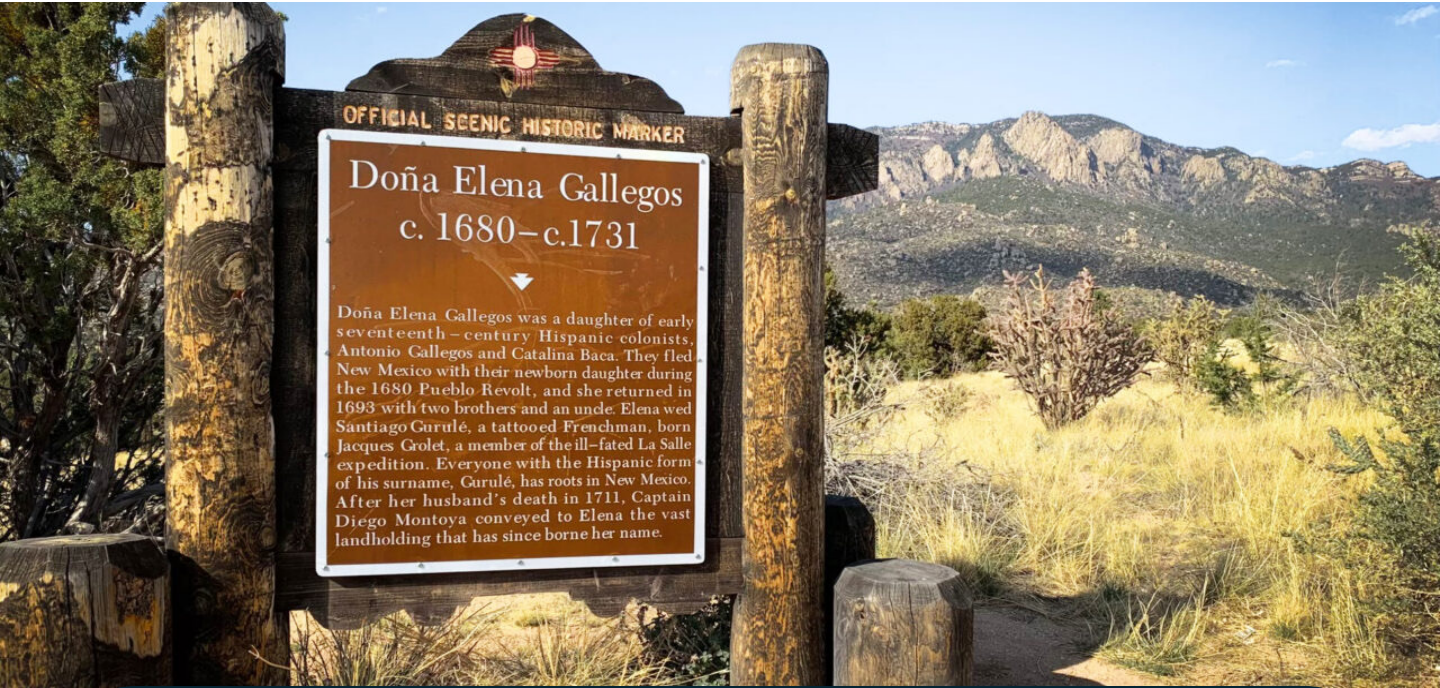
Steve is active in exploring city open space, largely on his mountain bike, in the foothills near his home, but also in the Bosque and in what he considers an under-recognized gem, the Golden Open Space east of the Sandias. Steve is the father of three and grandfather of 6; the 2 kids and 3 grandkids in Albuquerque also take full advantage of Albuquerque's wonderful open space.

Other board members include Jeannie Allen, Lance Chilton, Bill Pentler, and Kent Swanson.



# And here's the answer to where Colleen is riding:

One of the many fine trails at the Elena Gallegos Open Space!



## A little about the history and amenities at Elena Gallegos

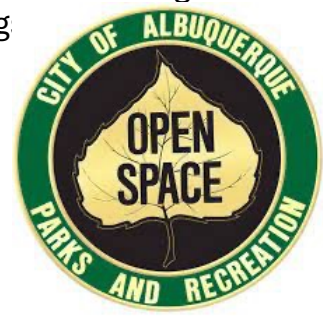
The land from the crest of the mountain to the Rio Grande was originally given to Diego Montoya in 1694 by the Marquis de la May Brazinas, Governor and then Captain General of the province of New Mexico in New Spain. In 1716 the grant of 35,084 acres was transferred to Elena Gallegos for reasons unknown to historians. The land stayed in the Gallegos family until the 1920's when it was lost due to back taxes.

The land then ended up in the hands of Albert G. Simms, a prominent local lawyer, banker and politician. Simms died in 1964 leaving the land to the Albuquerque Academy. In the 1980's the City of Albuquerque bought over 8,000 acres from the Albuquerque Academy. As part of a complex land exchange with the U.S. Forest Service, 640 acres were preserved as Public Open Space and turned into the Elena Gallegos Picnic Area and Albert G. Simms Park, while the remaining land became part of the Sandia Mountain Wilderness Area. Today the City Open Space Division manages more than 30,000 acres of land.

...from the Elena Gallegos Open Space Guide, available to all on our website

## We want you!... to join us and/or to donate toward our work.

Please see how to support our efforts at [openspacealliance.org](http://openspacealliance.org). See page 5 for coming clean up projects sponsored by OSA. And you're always welcome at our meeting



# Help us keep our open space pristine and beautiful (and have fun in the process)!

## Upcoming clean-up events

### May 18th : National River Cleanup

**Event Description:** This one-day event attracts up to 100 volunteers who help remove trash from a section of the Rio Grande and bosque. Participants include all ages of boaters, hikers, trail runners, mountain bikers, anglers, and equestrians. Volunteers are treated to morning refreshments and an afternoon barbecue.

**Number of Participants:** 100 volunteers on average

**Needs:**

- ◆ Healthy morning snacks such as fruit, granola bars, juice, yoghurt and water.
- ◆ Coffee and hot water for tea.
- ◆ Barbecue foods including meats, chips, rolls and condiments
- ◆ Monetary donation to the Open Space Alliance

### June 1<sup>th</sup>: National Trails Day

#### (Open Space Alliance and the American Hiking Society)

**Event Description:** This one-day event attracts 100 - 125 volunteers who work on one of a dozen outdoor projects located within the Albuquerque Open Space and Sandia Mountain Wilderness. Participants include all ages of hikers, trail runners, mountain bikers, and equestrians. Volunteers are treated to morning refreshments, an afternoon meal, and donated product prize drawing. T-shirts are available to the first 100 volunteers who register.

**Number of Participants:** 100 -125 volunteers on average

**Needs:**

- ◆ Healthy morning snacks such as fruit, granola bars, juice, yoghurt and water.
- ◆ Coffee and hot water for tea.
- ◆ Food for the afternoon meal (cold sandwiches, fruit, cold cuts, cheese plates, chips, etc.)
- ◆ Donated items such as gift certificates and outdoor gear/apparel for the free door prize drawing.
- ◆ Monetary donation to the Open Space Alliance



For information and signup for these events: contact  
Jenny Blackmore, [jblackmore@cabq.gov](mailto:jblackmore@cabq.gov), 505-768-3072.

