



## Open Space Alliance Newsletter, July 2024

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

**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.



Tijeras BioZone. Photos © Bill Pentler

#### Exciting Coming Events in Albuquerque's Open Space

Kundalini Yoga at OSVC, Saturday mornings, July 1- July 29, 9-10 AM.

Tijeras BioZone Guided Hike (ages 18+) July 5 and Aug. 2 from 9 to 11 AM

Come join Open Space Educators on a 1-mile guided hike through the Tijeras Arroyo nestled between the Sandia and Manzano Mountains. Learn about the rich living history of this location dating back into the 1300s. Tijeras Biozone Education Center, 15600 Central SE

Bosque Wild Guided Hike, July 6 and 13

Come join the Open Space Nature Guides and Trail Watch Volunteer Stewards on an adventure into one of the gems of Albuquerque's Open Spaces. Discussions will include the history and prehistory of the area, the flora and fauna, the geology and archaeology, the importance of water to the ecosystem.

*So much going on! Continued on page 5*

# Dionne Epps, Open Space Visitor Center's Manager, Welcomes You



*Dionne and her son and daughter at the OSVC*

.Dionne said that she enjoys planning and overseeing events, witnessing human interactions, reflecting on what transpired, and being able to see the events through. She believes that her goal as the manager is to implement the OSVC's, and OSD's mission and educate the public about the importance of protecting the environment.

When asked what her biggest challenges in her job were she stated that getting the word out about the OSVC's various programs to the different communities. She acknowledged that her work can be demanding. Nevertheless, it is a joy to see the community and artists come together. She works hard to strive and maintain a balanced relationship between the Open Space Division and the public.

Dionne is from Little Rock, Arkansas and her last job held there was as a Community Facilitator for the City of Little Rock. Dionne has always worked with volunteers and continues to do so on a daily basis. She acknowledges that the Open Space Visitor Center can not run without the front desk, garden, and special events volunteers.

When asked how the Juneteenth celebration went, Dionne said that it was very successful, and she was pleased with the number of people who attended the event (265). She also said that she would like to see more events like this. As a person who values her ancestors, she enjoys taking time to honor them.

Dionne was with her daughter, Justus, and her oldest son Otis who came to helped set up the event for Juneteenth. The two enjoyed the day, according to Dionne. She also has six grandkids ranging in age from eight months to ten years old between New Mexico and Arkansas.

Dionne notes that the OSVC has the role within the Open Space Division is as the "major educational hub for division itself. Her hopes for the future include turning a small warehouse near the field east of the visitor center into an educational center to increase Albuquerqueans' knowledge of conservation, wildlife, and the environment. And she wants "our wetlands to be the best in the state. All of this will take time," but Dionne's the person for the job.





# Kent Swanson, Open Space Alliance Membership Chair and So Much More



Kent working with children on a papel picado art project

a “great opportunity to work in a space that celebrated both art and ecology. [I had] interesting people to collaborate with and I could bring in artists and experts in fields related to natural resources, history, archaeology, anthropology, and so on.” The Open Space Visitor Centers location, he said, made it hard to reach out to the public; Kent said that he was continually perplexed that many Albuquerqueans didn’t know about the very nice place, and it was hard to get the word out to get people there. Kent complimented OSA for paying for bus transportation to the site, well away from the center of the metro area., getting buses, etc.

Kent is an Albuquerque native but left after high school to spend four years at Occidental College where he studied both art and geology on his way to his bachelor’s degree. He then returned to New Mexico to obtain a master’s degree in Community and Regional Planning from the University of New Mexico; he says that the program here was ideal for his combination of interests, and that he was glad to be back home. He has worked locally and internationally (including in the Peace Corps in Honduras) in a variety of projects including municipal development, environmental conservation, and art education.

Kent, his brother, his father and his son are now three generations happy to be in the outdoors in and around Albuquerque. The three of them – together or separately – love kayaking on the Rio Grande and hiking in the Bosque and foothills, and in Albuquerque Open Space’s East Mountain properties. Like his father, Kent is a birder and feels himself to be an aspiring amateur naturalist. “I enjoy learning,” Kent Swanson said in summing up his involvement with OSD and OSA and with Bernalillo County, and we on the Board enjoy learning from and with him.

The Open Space Alliance and open space in general are fortunate to have Kent Swanson as a member of the OSA board, of which he is the vice-president and the OSA membership chair. Kent knows open space intimately, having worked for the city’s Open Space Division for more than a dozen years, and having taken advantage of many chances to use our wonderful Open Space for recreation for himself and family members.

Kent was selected to the OSA board shortly after having changed positions: after ten years as a planner in natural resources for the Open Space Division, Kent was named to be manager of Albuquerque’s wonderful Open Space Visitor Center, a position he embraced for four years, working alongside an “exceptional group”, in his words, of city employees.

Kent Swanson currently serves as Bernalillo County’s Public Art Project Coordinator, a position he feels is perfect for him. He continues to be an active artist himself, working especially in printmaking and book arts, working on artist books, woodcuts, linoleum prints, and intaglio.

Kent said that being manager of the visitor center was

Other OSA board members include Jeannie Allen, Lance Chilton, Steve Glass and Bill Pentler..





# THE BOSQUE WILD GUIDED HIKE

By Richard Shackley



Late in 2008, under the watchful eye of Jodi Hedderig, former Open Space Visitor Center manager, the first guests on the Bosque Wild: Guided Nature Walk, now known as the Bosque Wild Guided Hike, set out to experience the wonders of the Bosque. Elsa Bumstead, followed by Verne Huser, and Charlie Wood. These first guides passed on their binoculars, walking sticks, and a treasure-trove of information to the current group of dedicated Nature Guides.

The Middle Rio Grande Valley is a natural wonder that has something different to offer any time of day, and every season of the year. Along the banks of the Rio Grande, the fourth longest river in the United States, lives one of the largest riparian cottonwood forests in the world. Most commonly known as “The Bosque”, this extraordinary gem offers a quiet refuge away from the fast-paced world of Albuquerque city life.

Plant life abounds along the Rio Grande. The river is the foundation but the Rio Grande Cottonwood is the anchor of the Bosque, and other trees and shrubs live scattered throughout the landscape. Non-native species like Russian olive, saltcedar (tamarix), Siberian elm, and Russian thistle (tumbleweed); and native Goodding and peachleaf willows, New Mexico olive, coyote willow, false indigo, seepwillow and various grasses and aquatic plants provide a seasonally ever-changing habitat and hideaway for the many critters found throughout the Bosque ecosystem.

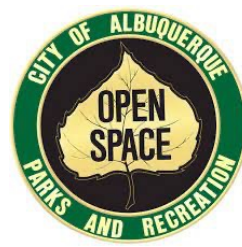
Albuquerque’s Bosque is a home for over 200 species of birds from the majestic sandhill crane to the mini powerhouse black-chinned hummingbird. The Bosque harbors a wide variety of mammals: the reclusive porcupine (pictured), often observed slumbering in the cottonwood canopy; the skittish coyote; and even an occasional beaver leaving trailing wakes on the river’s surface. Many insects, reptiles, and amphibians fly, crawl, slither and jump throughout this rich habitat. The list of critters that make the Bosque their home is much too long to be included in this short article. You’ll just have to explore this riverine forest yourself to see the wide variety of flora and fauna.

The Bosque Wild Guided Hike leaves the Open Space Visitor Center at 8am on the first Saturday of every month (this summer, July 6 and August 3). To make reservations for the walk, call 505-768-4950, 505-768-4960, or stop by the Open Space Visitor Center to register in-person and enjoy all that the center has to offer. Have a look at page 1 of this newsletter; you can also view the Open Space Visitor Center calendar of events at the following link:

<https://www.cabq.gov/parksandrecreation/open-space/open-space-visitor-center>

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

Please see how to support our efforts at [openspacealliance.org](https://www.openspacealliance.org). And you’re always welcome at our meetings.



and more!

# All this going on in ABQ Open Space!

continued from the first page

## [East Gallery Opening Reception. July 13](#)

Artist: Artworks

## [Lecture: From Caves to Cubism to the OSVC: What does the artist see? July 13](#)

[An Evening Hike Series July 13](#) and Aug. 24 from 4:30 PM to 6 PM

Join us for a free evening hike in the Bosque.

## [A Free Sunset Concert with The High Desert Playboys July 13](#) from 6 to 8 PM

Bring your lawn chairs, picnic basket, and join us on the back patio for an evening Sunset Concert by Clarke Libbey and the High Desert Playboys.

## [FREE Neighborhood Open Space Community Concerts. July 14 and Aug. 10](#) from 6 to 8:30 PM

Join us for a family-friendly event highlighting great musical artists and performers. Bring a chair or blanket, picnic dinner, and enjoy free entertainment, paletas, face painting, bosque traveling exhibit truck, rock climbing wall, hands-on nature activities, and incredible views of your public lands under the light of the setting sun.

## [Ceramics with Kat Richter-Sand and Carmen Caswell. July 19](#)

Both presenters will share their ceramic creations inspired by local flora, fauna, and landscapes followed by a hands-on workshop using red micaceous clay.

## [Lecture: Open Space, An Accessible Gateway to Albuquerque's Wild Lands. July 20](#)

Philip Johnson, Ph.D., will give a visual presentation on his personal experience as a biologist and photographer with mobility limitations.

[Early Morning Hike Series July 20 and Aug. 17](#) from 08:00 AM to 11:00 AM

Join us for a FREE morning Trek through the Bosque!

[Trail Watch Volunteer Training July 20](#) from 9 to 11 AM

Train to be an Open Space Trail Watch Volunteer  
[Intro to the Outdoors: Learn to Birdwatch July 20](#) from 9 to 11 AM

Join staff and volunteer experts and explore various Open Space properties and experience all that your public lands have to offer.

[Candelaria Nature Preserve Guided Hike, Ages 18+, July 26 and Aug. 30](#), 10 AM – 12 PM

Come explore the Candelaria Nature Preserve where wildlife abounds and a major restoration effort is underway to convert farm fields to a mosaic of wildlife habitat. Meet at west end of Arbor Rd. off Rio Grande Blvd.



[Family Nature Club: Covering Camping \(all ages\) July 27](#) from 9 to 11 AM

Join an Open Space educator for a family-friendly hike and engage in hands-on learning together as a family, listen to natural history fun facts, enjoy storytelling, and seek out wildlife. At Carolino Canyon, Tijeras

[Sunset Hike Series July 27 and Aug. 10](#) from 6 PM to 7:30 PM

Join us for a FREE sunset hike in the Bosque from OSVC.

[Soaring through Summer: Learn to Photograph Wildlife](#)

**Aug 2**, 11 AM to 1 PM and **Aug 3** 8 AM to 10 AM.

Also **Aug 9**, 11 AM to 1 PM to 3 PM and **Aug 10**, 8 AM to 10 AM.

Join staff and volunteer experts and explore various Open Space properties and experience all that your public lands have to offer.

[Soaring through Summer: Learn to Birdwatch](#)

**Aug. 15** 1 PM to 3 PM and **Aug. 16**, 10 AM to 12 PM.

Also **Aug 22**, 1 PM to **Aug 23** 10 AM

Join staff and volunteer experts and explore various Open Space properties and experience all that your public lands have to offer.

[Family Nature Club: In a Flash \(all ages\) Aug. 17](#) from 9 AM to 11 AM

Join an Open Space educator for a family-friendly hike and engage in hands-on learning together as a family, listen to natural history fun facts, enjoy storytelling, and seek out wildlife. Tingley Beach, 1800 Tingley Dr. SW

*All events are at the Open Space Visitor Center, 6500 Coors NW, except as noted*



# NATIONAL TRAILS DAY® 2024

By Richard Shackley

National Trails Day® is an annual event sponsored by the American Hiking Society. The very first event was held on June 5, 1993, but its history began in 1968 when President Lyndon Johnson signed into law, the National Trails System Act establishing national recreation, scenic and historic trails. Each year, tens of thousands of eager participants come together to advocate for, maintain, and clean up public lands and trails. On the event's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, nearly 180,000 volunteers nationwide joined together to help make America's outdoors a more welcoming and attractive open space experience.



Photo by Bill Pentler

What did 76 enthusiastic volunteers, including 17 kiddos, do on the first of June, 2024 during *our* National Trails Day® event at the Elena Gallegos Open Space? They all got dirt covered and sweated a lot while building and maintaining over one mile of trails, planting cane cholla and prickly pear cacti to close off short cuts and unofficial social trails, constructing rock steps and retaining walls leading into the Pino Arroyo along the Nature Trail, picking up trash that filled several garbage bags, and searching out and removing the little gems our family pets have left behind.



Photo by Kevin Wall

Fourteen motivated crews set out mid-morning after gorging on snacks and coffee. Pushing wheelbarrows, and with shovels, McLeods, Mattocks, rock bars, buckets, trash grabbers and other tools in hand, the excited volunteers with their crew leaders and Open Space staff, headed out to the far reaches of the Elena Gallegos Open Space to help make this gem of the Open Space properties continue to be one of the most popular and one of most visited open spaces in the Albuquerque Metropolitan area.



Photo by Bill Pentler

Thanks to the Open Space Alliance for providing the snacks and buffet lunch that kept the volunteer's energy at a peak. And thanks to the many vendors and individuals who donated a wide variety of prizes for the after trail work raffle.

A special thanks to Bill Pentler and Kevin Wall ([kevinwallphotography.com](http://kevinwallphotography.com)) for the wonderful images they provided for this article. Check out Kevin Wall's website for more images.



So next year, if you'd like to have a bunch-o-fun, mark your calendar for the first Saturday in June, and join an enthusiastic, dedicated, and fun-loving group of volunteers for our next National Trails Day®.