

Open Space Alliance Newsletter, January 2025



Photo by Bill Pentler

Have a look at our wonderful website, openspacealliance.org, recently redesigned by Sunny505 here in Albuquerque!

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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.

Robin Abrett, Woman of Many Talents, Joins OSA Board



New OSA Board member Robin Abrett and her husband Bernie are seasoned hikers; they moved to Albuquerque from their former home in northern New Jersey in order to find places to walk in the Rockies. In their former location, they had been active in hiking in the Adirondacks and Appalachians, but also in maintaining trails, especially in New York's [Harriman State Park](#).

Like many previous new arrivals in New Mexico (Carrie Tingley, for example), the Abretts were glad to escape the humidity and mold that make respiratory diseases worse.

Unlike many new arrivals, Robin and Bernie have quickly moved to benefit their new home. While walking in Albuquerque's Rio Grande Bosque or in Petroglyph National Monument, they have also taken part in trail maintenance and cleanup, crediting OSA member Richard Shackley, who leads hikes in the Bosque (and writes articles for this newsletter) with introducing them to working on the trails. The Abretts now work on the Bosque trail all the way from Alameda on the north to Tingley Beach on the south.

In New Jersey, Robin was an accountant specializing in tax-related work. As she did for other organizations in New Jersey, she helps the Open Space Alliance by assuring that we are in compliance with 1099s, the tax form required annually of non-profits, and meeting requirements for scanning and saving documents,

giving us another set of practiced eyes on our processes.

A woman of many talents, Robin has also been a certified yoga teacher in the Kripalu method, although she is no longer teaching that or pilates or senior fitness as she had before moving here. In New Mexico, she practices yoga techniques, especially meditation and breathing methods only on her own.

Robin says that she loves "Hiking, cleaning, making our Open Space clean and ready for others." She especially likes being able to walk along the river and go to close-by places. "When I walk the trails in the Bosque, I find just the right number of people – not too many, I get a nice feeling from others – the many friendly people on the trails. We'll keep seeing all that New Mexico has to offer. That's what I like about [our new state]: We've kept the beauties of New Mexico for everyone to enjoy.

"This country is so beautiful," new OSA Board member Robin Abrett says. "My husband and I have been to 75 of the national parks and many of its baseball stadiums." Parks and baseball stadiums have become our excuse for exploring parts of this country."



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





Painting by Colleen Shackley



Photo by Bill Pentler

By Richard Shackley

During a winter's walk through the Bosque, have you ever heard a heavenly trumpeting call from the skies above? Looking skyward, you may just have seen our most celebrated visitor...the sandhill crane.

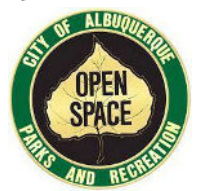
Named for their large population, over 500,000 strong, visiting Nebraska's North Platte Sandhills, these majestic birds migrate south during the winter to find warmth and food, then north in the summer to breed. The cranes travel up to 14,000 miles round trip between their breeding grounds as far away as Siberia, and their wintering grounds in New Mexico, Texas, and northern Mexico. Open Space farms such as Los Poblanos, Candelaria, and the Open Space Visitor Center provide winter feeding grounds for the sandhill cranes. Cranes are omnivores. Their diet includes tubers, seeds, grains, insects, small mammals and birds, reptiles, amphibians, and invertebrates. Prehistorically, the cranes found many natural meadows along the Rio Grande to feed and rest. After the river was engineered, and agricultural fields populated the river valley, the cranes found food and rest in those fields.

There are six sub-species of sandhill cranes currently recognized, and the greater sub-species and the lesser sub-species are common to the Albuquerque area. The earliest sandhill crane fossil, estimated to be 2.5 million years old, was found in Florida. Ten-million-year-old crane fossils have been found in other parts of the world making the crane possibly the oldest living bird species. Cranes mate for life, which can mean two decades or more, and stay with their mates year-round. The pair will build a three- to five-foot wide nest near or in a shallow marsh. The female will usually lay two eggs, and the pair will take turns incubating the eggs. Usually only one of the baby birds, called colts, survives. When the colt is four to five months old, the cycle starts again.

Throughout the world, different cultures' awe for the crane has been expressed through art, artifacts, mythology, and legends. Pottery designs, pictographs, and petroglyphs of cranes appear in the American Southwest beginning over 1,000 years ago and there are images of cranes pecked into the boulders at the Petroglyph National Monument here in Albuquerque. The crane is featured in many Native American rituals and tales. In the Far East, the crane symbolizes immortality, longevity, happiness, good luck, and fidelity. The crane is often pictured in Egyptian tomb paintings, and the hieroglyph for "soul" or "spirit" is said to be the crane.

Celebrations for our feathered friends occur every November at the Open Space Visitor Center, and at Bosque del Apache every December.

We are often a little sad to see our majestic sandhill cranes leave in March and April, but we can celebrate the return of our summer visitors. The powerhouse hummingbird and the soaring turkey vulture among others take the sandhill crane's place for our bird watching pleasure then to be replaced in turn some months later by our wonderful cranes..



Hidden Gems of Albuquerque's Open Space: Golden Open Space

We'd like to highlight one of Albuquerque's Open Space parcels – some of its gems that are not quite as well known as the Bosque along the Rio Grande, the Open Space Visitor Center or the Elena Gallegos Grant, all of which are worthy of their fame. But they aren't all we have in our wonderful collection of undeveloped land in the system. So each of our next several newsletters will feature one of those other magnificent places.

On a bright, warm(ish) winter day, OSA Board members Bill Pentler and Lance Chilton headed for the East Mountains to the Golden (or Sandoval County, as it is listed on the [city's website](#)) Open Space Area, which lies west of the East Mountain High School in San Antonito. [Golden Open Space](#) is a 1,180-acre preserve consisting of two mesas divided by a rugged and colorful arroyo complex. The dense arroyos cut through red, gray and yellow sandstone, limestone and mudstone making for great scenery.

Bill, a master photographer, documented some of the beautiful scenery seen from the Los Duendes Trail at the top of the mesa and in the arroyo below. Lance was glad to be along for the walk and Bill's description of acquiring and developing the property. There are mountain bike tracks, shoeprints, and horseshoe marks on each of the trails, but we saw no one. We'll report back on our next outing – hope it's as wonderful as this one!

You'll notice on the city's website that the mesa-top part of the trail, a magnificent 2.2-mile inspiring-viewed loop, is called Los Duendes Trail. *What is a Duende?* According to Oxford Languages, a duende is a supernatural being or spirit [resembling a pixie](#) or imp. Maybe these beings created the trail that seemed to pop up suddenly. More likely, wonderful Open Space Division staff did.



All photos by Bill Pentler

What's Happening in Space (ABQ Open Space) in Jan. & Feb.?

There are too many wonderful events happening every two months in city and county Open Space to list in each issue of a short newsletter. So here are some highlights of coming attractions, and details are available on the [City's Open Space Division events website](#) and on [Bernalillo County's Open Space](#) webpage.

A few extra-special events to highlight these two months:

Wing in the New Year: Jan. 4 from 9:00 to 11 am, Candelaria Nature Preserve. Birding bio blitz co -hosted by the Bird Alliance of Central New Mexico. Perfect for anyone new to birding, with an introduction to binoculars, field guides, and eBird.

Family Nature Club: Carving out History (all ages): Jan 11 10 AM to 12 PM Rinconada Canyon. This 2.2-mile roundtrip, family-friendly hike will inform walkers how human societies and cultures have developed in this area.

Home Composting Basics, Jan. 18, 10 AM to 12 PM, OSVC. The class will cover the science, art, materials, methods and benefits of home composting.

OSVC East Gallery Opening with artist Sarah Manning: Jan. 25, 2 pm – 4 pm

Community Biochar Workshop : Jan 25, 2025 from 10 AM to 12 PM, OSVC. Free community workshop on making useable charcoal.

Outdoor Field School: The Riparian Ecosystem. OSVC, Jan. 25, 9 AM to 12 PM, for 10-15 year olds., \$10, studying the environment of the Rio Grande.

Bosque Wild Series: Feb. 1, 8 AM to 10 AM, OSVC: Join us on an adventure into one of the gems of Albuquerque's Open Space. Discussions will include history, prehistory, flora, fauna, water, conservation and stewardship.

Family Nature Club : Geology Rocks: Feb. 8, 9 AM to 1 PM, Volcanoes Day Use Area. Join an Open Space Educator on a 1-mile roundtrip, family-friendly hike to a scenic overlook of the Middle Rio Grande Valley. This hike will focus on the local geology with hands-on learning activities to engage in together as a family.

Sunset Hike Series: Feb. 15, 5 PM to 6:30 PM, OSVC. Join Open Space folk for an evening stroll in the Bosque as we explore local flora and fauna, ecology, art, history, and more! Experience iconic sunset views of the Sandia Mountains and Bosque Forest life while learning about our Open Spaces!

Morning Trek Series- Volcanoes Day Use Area, van from OSVC. Feb. 22, 8 AM to 11 AM. Join us on a tour and hike through our Open Space lands to discover the diversity of our local ecosystems and history of our Open Space legacy. Reservations needed: (505) 768-4200 or (505) 768-4951.

Composting with Worms: Feb 15, 10 AM to 12 PM, OSVC. Join an expert for this free composting class.

All events are free except as noted; many occur at the OSVC (Open Space Visitor Center). Some require registration on line or at 505-768-4950. Events may change, so please check ahead.



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

Please see how to support our efforts at openspacealliance.org. And you're always welcome at our meetings.