

Open Space Alliance Newsletter, May 2025

Photo by Bill Pentler

A Message from Open Space Alliance President Steven Glass

As spring arrives and the warmer weather coaxes us to enjoy the outdoors more, it's important to remember how important Albuquerque's unique open space reserves are. Major Public Open Space (MPOS) offers opportunities for recreation, rejuvenation and restoration of the psyche for both local residents and visitors. It's also important to remember how much the Albuquerque Open Space Division (OSD) depends on the Open Space Alliance (OSA) to provide resources that help enhance the experiences of MPOS users. Without those resources, OSD has only enough funding for the bare minimum maintenance of the over 30,000 acres and several built facilities for which they are responsible. Amenities to which we've become accustomed, such as refreshments for volunteer trail crews, educational programs for children and adults, gallery displays at the Open Space Visitor Center, and the annual Return of the Cranes event, would not be possible without funding from OSA. The importance of OSA members in supporting OSD through OSA memberships, donations and volunteering cannot be overstated, and I encourage each of you to renew your membership if it has expired, to consider an additional tax-deductible gift to OSA and to help spread the word about the Open Space Alliance by volunteering to help host a table at one of the many public events over the summer. Thank you, as always, for your support of OSA and Albuquerque MPOS!

- Steve Glass

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.



←That's a duende

Christmas? No, Happy Trails' Day!

'Twas the night before Trails Day and all through
the park

Not a creature was stirring, not even a
hawk;

The pin flags were set upside down with care
In hopes that El Duende would soon be there;

The volunteers were nestled all snug in their beds,
While visions of raffle prizes danced in their heads;

Then up at dawn with my uniform and cap,
I felt like I had but only a nap,

When at the Elena there rose such a clatter,
I sprang from the booth to see what was the matter.

Away to the trail I flew like a bird,
To see what had made the noise that I heard.

The sun was rising and so was the heat,
I knew by the end of the day I'd be beat,
When what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But El Duende and one hundred and fifteen
volunteers!

A strange little creature, mischievous and friendly,
I knew in a moment it must be El Duende.

More rapid than eagles his crew leaders came,
And he whistled and shouted and called them by
name;

"Now John and Jonathan, Kyle and Bill!

Tricia, Joshua, Jodi and Jim

On Dionne, on James, Daniel and Charlie
Matthew, Mike and the whole Shackley family!"

To the Trails!" he called

Now build away, build away, build away all!"

Like grains of sand before the west wind fly,
When they blow through Montessa and blot out the
sky,

So up to their projects the crew leaders flew,
With wheel barrows of tools and El Duende too.

And then in a twinkling, I heard so loud
The scraping of a Pulaski and a McLeod.
As I picked up a tool, and was turning around,
Down the trail El Duende came with a bound.

He was dressed in green with a khaki shirt,
And his clothes were covered in dust and dirt;
Bundles of tools he had in piles,
And he looked like he was ready to hike for
miles.

His eyes how they darted! And oh what ears!

His nose had a point just like a spear's!

His droll little mouth was drawn up in a smile,
And the beard on his chin hadn't been groomed
in a while;

The handle of a Pulaski held tight in his hand,
And the dust from his digging encircled the land;
He had a broad face and a smile so gentle,
He laughed as he gave me a bag full of lentils.

He was short and lean, a right sprightly old
gnome,
And for a moment I thought I should have stayed
home;

A wink of his eye and the promise of beer,
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to fear;

He spoke not a word, and then built a drain dip,
And filled in all the ruts; then paused for a sip,
And laying his finger aside his chin beard,
And giving a nod, for the end had neared;

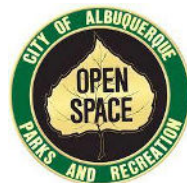
He sprang to his trail and gave his team a cheer,
And away he went to buy them all beer.
I heard him exclaim, 'ere he hiked out of sight,

HAPPY TRAILS DAY TO ALL,

• AND TO ALL A GOOD-NIGHT!



Written by Open Space staff, and
published thanks to Richard Shackley



Hidden Gems of Albuquerque's Open Space: Juan Tomas Open Space

The Juan Tomas Open Space, a beautiful hidden gem of our Albuquerque Open Space system, sits right off Juan Tomas Road in the East Mountains, right? Wrong. In searching for it to report to you on this beautiful place, I drove almost to the town of Juan Tomas before turning around. The road is just not in good shape.

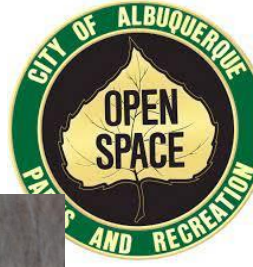
Eventually I found an entrance to the lovely, unspoiled trail system a few miles south, off the Oak Flats Road, which heads east from NM Highway 337 between mileposts 20 and 21, just about 9 miles south of Tijeras. Take that Oak Flats Road for almost 2.5 miles east of Hwy. 337, and just before the road makes a hard right turn and becomes Anaya Road, gates north of the road yield up a fine trail system.

Immediately after entering the enclave, I felt at peace as I walked the grassy, slightly rolling hills among ponderosas, piñones and junipers. Having frittered away too much time searching for the entrance to the Juan Tomas Open Space, I couldn't walk more of the many miles of trails heading further north and east from my starting point. But I will; the view from above at "Kathy's Bench" is outstanding.

Who was Juan Tomas?

<https://www.newmexicoghosttowns.net/juan-tomas-nm> tells us that the man was a rancher, who began a ranch and a town in the hills east of the Manzano Mountains in the 1870s. Due to lack of water, the town was abandoned in the 1960s, but the lovely open space remains. ---Lance Chilton





Mr. Donovan, Open Space Volunteer Coordinator, Is a Jonathan of All Trades



Jonathan Donovan wears a hat and many hats for the Open Space Division. Having worked there for the last nine years, he has recently been named volunteer coordinator, but he fills in there and whenever needed, hat on head and camera around neck. He can be seen anywhere there's open space – along the Bosque, at the Open Space Visitor Center, in the foothills and at East Mountain Open Space properties such as Golden or Juan Tomas.

Jonathan says that he loves his work. Previously a technical support person for a mobile phone company, he appreciates a much lower pressure environment, the variety he experiences in this position. Being outdoors among OSD's 30,000 acres, he figures, is an outstanding perk, as is working with excellent people. Asked if there were downsides to OSD work, he had trouble coming up with some: the graffiti and illegal dumping that disfigure some parts of Open Space.

Many of us in OSD and OSA remain surprised that many Albuquerqueños know little about our bounteous open space possessions. Asked how he would change that, Jonathan mentions "Improvement in social media presence, keeping up with public events, such as spring cleanups and river cleanups. "We should keep doing more public outreach, getting people interested and engaged and perhaps having more nature hikes or history-based walks."

Jonathan said that "we're in the midst of foothills cleanups at each of major trailheads, through first week in May, doing trail maintenance, picking up garbage and cleaning graffiti. On May 17 we'll have one of two annual river cleanups, including National River Cleanup Day around Central Ave. It's fabulous to see the number of volunteers; we couldn't do without them." Jonathan praised the camaraderie between volunteers and staff, often some brand new volunteers.

Perhaps the most characteristic quote from OSD's wonderful Jonathan Donovan was that he enjoys the "non-stop learning experience that is life."

What's Happening in Space (ABQ Open Space) in May and June?

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:

Discovery Day: Powerful Pollinators (ages 0-6)

May 1, 6 or 14, 2025 or June 21 from 10:30 AM to 11:30 AM

Join an Open Space Educator with your little one at an Albuquerque Public Library and have fun together making discoveries about the natural world with hands-on science, story time, and an art project.

Intro to the Outdoors: Learn to Garden (ages 18+)

May 2, 7 or 16, 2025 from 01:30 PM to 03:00 PM

Play like a grown-up and join us for classes that introduce the basic principles of various outdoor activities.

Poet's Picnic

May 3, 10 am-4 pm. **Date:** 5/3, **Times:** 10:00am-4:00pm, The day will include a guided tour, poetry readings, workshops, music, food, books, and more in a beautiful location. Registration recommended with the link here [Poet's Picnic - Activity Information](#)

Opening Gallery Receptions

May 10, 2 – 4 pm: Come join us for an opening reception and gallery talk with the Luna Project collective and with artist Dan Noyes!

Mother's Day Sunset Concert

May 10, 6 pm-8 pm. Come join us to listen to some tunes with the band, Last Call, and enjoy sunset views of the Bosque and Sandia Mountains! Registration recommended with the link here [Sunset Concert - Activity Information](#).

How to Look at Art

May 17, 2 pm -4 pm. Alice Webb will talk about the design principles of art referencing several pieces from the Full Circle exhibit. You will get insights into how artists

approach painting and sculpture. This is an interactive discussion, and handouts will be given. Registration **required** with the link here [How to Look at Art - Activity Information](#).

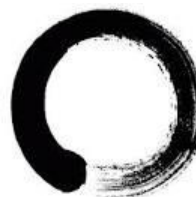
A Free Enso Drawing Workshop

Jun 20 from 2 pm – 3:30 pm

Celebrate a peaceful Summer Solstice learning about ensos, Zen circles.

There's so much more going on that we don't have space to print, so go to the websites (above) to find a lot more! And enjoy YOUR Open Space.

A painting in various hues of blue created and painted by artist and May speaker Alice Webb



An Enso



An open space ranger holds a bee puppet while talking to a group of young students on a forested trail.

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.