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This Looks Clean, Right? Thank Volunteers!

Every spring, volunteers get out in Open Space to tidy things up for all of us. Thanks to everyone who puts in long hours of work in the Bosque and in the foothills. Here are the events for this spring:

April: Foothills Spring Cleanups

Join the Open Space Division in a Spring cleanup of your favorite Foothills Open Space area! Each Saturday during April we will be getting together at a different Foothills parking area for a variety of grooming projects such as graffiti removal, trash cleanup and trail maintenance. Come out and meet Open Space representatives, neighbors and fellow trail users. Have some fun and show your support for the Sandia Foothills! To sign up for the individual events please visit [One Albuquerque Volunteers](#). Questions? Please contact the Trails Volunteer Program Coordinator Jonathan Donovan,

May: National River Cleanup

National River Cleanup takes place on the 3rd Saturday of May each year. Roll up your sleeves and join us for this morning of community service! There are projects for all ages and abilities, including trash pick-up, trail construction and rehabilitation, and revegetation. National River Cleanup was started in 1991 by America Outdoors, a

national association of outfitters and guides, and American Rivers, a North American conservation organization, as a way to assist local communities to keep their rivers, watersheds and shorelines clean. There are three ways to participate:

Community cleanup at the Central Avenue bridge. Parking is limited, so please carpool if possible. Volunteers should dress for working outdoors and bring water, a hat, work gloves, and sunscreen.

Organize your own Bosque clean-up. If you have a favorite area of the Bosque, consider hosting a clean-up of your own! Open Space will provide trash bags.

Clean the river using your own boat. You must provide your own transportation and shuttle for your boat. Visit EMNRD.nm.gov for required NM State Parks Boating safety regulations. Volunteers can register for the event at [Ones](#). Questions? Please contact the Trails Volunteer Program Coordinator.



Spring Cleanup Photos



Photos by
Bill Pentler, OSA
board member,
photographer and
enthusiastic
steward of our
beautiful Open
Spaces

Augusta Farley Joins OSA Board as Delegate from Candelaria Nature Preserve

Augusta Farley is the Open Space Alliance's newest board member; she represents the Candelaria Nature Preserve on OSA's governing board. Augusta is a remarkable volunteer, serving not only OSA and the Candelaria Nature Preserve but also the New Mexico Street Pet Project and the ABQ Ride's Transit Advisory Board. When interviewed, recently, Augusta said that she was "honored to be part of group of people concerned about nature and the environment" and proud of Albuquerque for having done so much in preserving open space.



Augusta has lived in Albuquerque's South Valley for the last three years, but spent time here in the 1970s as well as a behavioral health specialist. She worked for Albuquerque's Rape Crisis Center, for Bernalillo County and for the state of New Mexico in that role, including working with unhoused people. She found herself to be especially interested in the animals – usually dogs – that unhoused people owned and which contributed to their often-fragile sense of well-being. Augusta became involved in providing for these animals' well-being, seeing to their receiving adequate food and veterinary care. She took on this responsibility first in California and then again when she returned to New Mexico, where she is currently an office in the New Mexico Street Pet Project, of which she is vice-president. According to their website, "Augusta lives with two dogs and a steady stream of foster dogs." She told me that she certified in teaching pets to be "Canine Good Citizens," including for such applications as visiting in homes for the elderly and in libraries' Read to the Dogs programs.

Augusta has been active in a variety of preservation and conservation programs as well, including Candelaria Nature Preserve (CNP), the Master Gardener Program, and, now, the Open Space Alliance. She tells me that she loves to walk, usually with one or more dogs, in the open space of the Rio Grande State Park near her house. She is anxious to balance the needs for restoration and "re-wilding" of the CNP with the need to get children and adults out in nature and soliciting their support when they see how wonderful our natural environment is.

Augusta brings these beliefs to the OSA board: "I certainly think it important to educate the public about natural spaces, availability of green space, water, trees, ability to walk in areas that bring calmness and awe." She also said that "People need to respect our open spaces in order to protect them and that "behavioral health detects how people feel – nature affects how we feel, brings us peace, calmness, behavioral and mental health."





THEN ↑



Abandoned Little Beaver Town, October '63 (Photo by Dick Kent)



NOW ↑



Amusement Park to Ruin to Beautiful Trailhead

Had you visited between 1960 and 1963, you'd have found the Red Ryder-themed Little Beaver Park near the east end of Albuquerque. Complete with Western-themed buildings and reenactments, the amusement park lasted only that long, leaving behind only rubble. It isn't the same now; most would say it's even better.

"This spot is made for exploring!" said Parks & Recreation Department Director Dave Simon at last year's opening of Albuquerque's jewel-like Route 66 Trailhead and parking area. "Whether you're riding, hiking or just out for a breath of fresh air, it's fun, beautiful, and now open."

We explored it on a beautiful day in January – fellow OSA board member Bill Pentler and his wife Anna and I, parking their car and my bike in the beautifully landscaped spot east of Tramway and Central on Old Route 66. We walked south, down the hill into the Tijeras Arroyo, crossed the small stream and headed up the hill on the other side. The *duendes* of the Open Space Division have been working hard in the area, building trails along Tijeras Creek and up and around the hills on either side.

Trails paralleling the creek head east to and beyond the Tijeras Biozone Education Center near where Old 66 hits its lowest point – those trails continue east up the creek toward Carnué and Tijeras. The trails we chose headed south and up the hill to fine viewing places along the creek and up and down its valley – had we continued south, over the ridge we would have found our way into the Four Hills Open Space,

We met a lone mountain biker braving the often steep and rocky trails and a number of dog walkers and friendly fellow hikers. Bill is especially good at spotting and identifying birds, and there were many. We saw evidence of small mammals, but none were seen,

You can learn more about the Tijeras Cultural Corridor, also known as the Tijeras Arroyo Biological Zone, on [the city's website](#), which also contains a map of the area. We'll continue to go there – you should too, to watch the exciting developments occurring up and down the Corridor. And next issue, we'll write more about the Tijeras Biozone Education Center, including its child- and and person-with-disability-friendly trails. Stay tuned, and visit often.

Open Space Division's Kelly Eveland works well with everyone

“The main focus of me and my team is to provide access to Open Space, and to keep people and nature all safe together,” said Kelly Eveland, one of two Open Space Department Parks Programs Specialists. Kelly enjoys contact with people using Open Space and providing good customer service. He teaches the park attendants, whom he supervises, at Elena Gallegos Open Space and Boca Negra Canyon the elements of serving the public in a happy and considerate way. Sometimes he takes their places, even to the point where “I’m cleaning the restrooms.”

Kelly and his wife, an educational consultant who travels around the country to teach teachers how to teach math, moved here from San Diego with their 15-year-old Labrador-mastiff mix, who loved walking with his owners in Open Space until his age caught up with him. Kelly had been a teacher and a park ranger in California. “We do hike challenges,” Kelly said: a hike a week – 52 a year – in such places as, Vallecitos, Taos, Santa Fe and Open Space in and around Albuquerque. “We love identifying plants and animals, using [Seek by iNaturalist](#),” Kelly says.

When walking the trails in Open Space, Kelly says he is “amazed how little litter there is, much less than in San Diego.” The most common infractions he sees are people off trail and dogs off leash; their owners don’t seem to consider others being afraid of dogs or their dogs being distracted by wild animals distract dogs. Kelly works hard to approach people, even sometimes giving them a leash. We’re glad to have Kelly Eveland on our wonderful trails with us!



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.



Monsters in Our Midst

Photos and article by Richard Shackley

They have boney horns on their heads, spikey scales on their backs, some can bury themselves in the sand, they can puff themselves up to look larger to thwart predators, they are well camouflaged, and some can even squirt foul tasting blood out of the corners of their eyes and have lived on the planet for over fifteen million years. They are not mythical dragons or monsters from our nightmares, they are the fascinating, odd-looking reptiles we call Horned Lizards or Horny Toads.

The genus *Phrynosoma* (meaning toad-bodied), or Horned Lizard can be found throughout the western United States and from southern Canada to northern Guatemala. Of the over twenty species of Horned Lizards, 15 are native to the United States. There are at least 5 Horned Lizard species that call New Mexico their home and 4 of those species can be found within and surrounding the Albuquerque Metropolitan area.

The Greater Short-Horned Lizard (*Phrynosoma hernandesi*), is common at higher elevations throughout the Sandia, Manzanita, and Manzano mountains. The author has seen this species scampering around the Kiwanis Cabin at over 10,000 feet in elevation. Unlike other Horned Lizards, this lizard does not lay eggs but bears live young. This may be an adaptation to living at higher elevations where the warmer seasons are short.

The Roundtail Horned Lizard (*Phrynosoma modestum*), is common on the west mesa and around the Petroglyphs. This diminutive lizard is considered one of the smallest of the Horned Lizards.

The Texas Horned Lizard (*Phrynosoma cornutum*), is less common in the metro than the above-described lizards but can be readily encountered in the southeastern part of the state. This lizard is one of the largest species of Horned Lizards. Some can be over 5-inches long and can cover an adult human's hand.

The Desert Short-Horned Lizard is even less common in the metro than the Texas Horned Lizard but have been spotted west of the river and as high as 10,000 feet in elevation. This lizard also bears live young.

Horned Lizards love to eat ants. Up to 90% of their diet is made up of ants with a preference for Harvester ants. They may also consume other insects including beetles, grasshoppers, spiders, termites and other insects. They usually capture their live prey with their sticky tongues rather than grabbing it with their jaws.

Due to habitat loss, collecting as pets or for sale, and pesticides used to eradicate their prey, these fascinating creatures are in decline nationwide. The five species found in New Mexico are protected as are most, if not all, of the species found in the United States. They should not be touched, picked up, collected, or harassed in any way. If we give these wonderful critters room to roam, help protect and preserve their habitats, and enjoy them from afar, these little "Monsters" just may be around for another fifteen million years.

What's Happening in ABQ Open Space in March, April and May?

There are too many wonderful events happening every three 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.

There are guided hikes in the Bosque, in the Tijeras Biozone, on the Candelaria Nature Preserve and in the foothills, introductory courses on composting, tai chi and yoga, photographing wildlife at Albuquerque libraries, yoga classes at the Open Space Visitor Center, guided hikes in various places in the morning and early evening, family nature club walks in the Elena Gallegos Grant open space and learning about volunteering. Locations include the Bosque, the fields near the Open Space Visitor center on the West Side, the Tijeras Bio-zone. Wow! For more info about these and other events, some of which require registration, call OSVC at 505-768-4950.

A few extra-special events to highlight during these three months:



Discovery Day | Powerful Pollinators, for ages 0-6 and their parents: Join an Open Space Educator at an Albuquerque Public Library for hands-on science, story time, and art as you and your little one explores the wonders of pollination! Families will learn about New Mexico's insects, starting with a pollinator race, creating butterfly art, and ending with a bee-themed book. Take home a packet of activities to keep the discovery going! **Dates:** April 9- Westgate Library; April 15, East Mountain Library; April 18, Taylor Ranch Library; April 22, San Pedro Library; April 23, Cherry Hills Library; May 7, Erna Fergusson Library; May 13, South Valley Library; May 20, Central & Unser Library.

Guided Hike | Foothills Wild: 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, and all of the wonderful things Albuquerque's Open Spaces have to offer.

Dates: Sunday, April 19 and May 17, Elena Gallegos | Cottonwood Springs parking lot.

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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.

March, April and May Events in Albuquerque

Open Space

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CITY NATURE CHALLENGE: [Petroglyphs National Monument: Piedras Marcadas Canyon Trail.](#) Participate in a guided hike with educators from Open Space Division and Petroglyph National Monument to explore our local plants and animals on the Piedras Marcadas Canyon Trail. Enjoy a beautiful sunset surrounded by all the West Mesa ecosystem has to offer. **Date:** April 25th from 5:30 to 7:30pm.

In addition to these programs, the division is also supporting library outreach, the City Nature Challenge, Earth Day events, spring clean-ups, gallery openings, and lectures. For information about these events and their times and whether registration is needed, go to the [Open Space Division's website.](#)



Jane Cornish Smith "Water's Edge 2" 2025 encaustic



Children on a Nature Hike, looking for birds

