



NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Beth Mills, Santa Fe County Open Space and Trails Program, (505) 992-9857;
Robert Gately, Campbell Corporation (505) 363-9500;
Mike Madden, Turquoise Trail Preservation Trust & East Mountain Regional Trail Council,
(505) 281-3393
Karen Yank, Turquoise Trail Preservation Trust, (505) 281-0243

Santa Fe County Approves Acquisition of Key Open Space and Trail Property in San Pedro Mountains

Public will benefit from new trail opportunities

SANTA FE, N.M. — The Santa Fe Board of County Commissioners approved the acquisition of 160 acres of land in southern Santa Fe County at their April 26th Board meeting. This is a major step in plans by Santa Fe County, Campbell Ranch Corporation, the Turquoise Trail Preservation Trust and the East Mountain Regional Trail Council to permanently protect this land located just south of Golden and next to Highway 14, which is designated as the Turquoise Trail National Scenic Byway. The San Pedro property in the East Mountains lies in the foothills of the San Pedro Mountains, containing a mix of pinyon pine, juniper and open meadows and with outstanding views of the nearby mountains, the valley and the Sandia Mountains.

The property is immediately adjacent to 2,200 acres of existing public land in the San Pedro Mountains that is owned and managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The acquisition of the San Pedro property by the County will provide for a public regional trailhead to allow for access to hiking, mountain biking and horseback riding on the 160 acre parcel, and ultimately, with the collaboration of other land owners, to connecting trails. BLM and the East Mountain Regional Trail Council are currently working together to create a trail plan for this adjacent federal land.

Funding for this purchase is provided by a 20 million bond measure for open space and trails that was passed by the voters of Santa Fe County in 2000. The purchase price of the 160-acre property is at the significantly discounted price of \$350,000. Campbell Farming Corporation wanted to ensure that the land be managed for the public benefit, and has also agreed to donate 5% of the purchase price back to the Santa Fe County Open Space Program's maintenance fund.

“The San Pedro property is a key link in our vision to create a major trail hub that would serve to access trails from the San Pedro Mountains to the Sandia Mountains on the west, north and

east to Lamy and Pecos, and south to Edgewood.” said Mike Madden of the East Mountain Regional Trail Council. Such a trail system would connect the natural resources of southern Santa Fe County with federal land (both BLM and Forest Service) and the Golden Open Space (owned by the City of Albuquerque) in nearby Sandoval and Bernalillo Counties.

The seller of the San Pedro property is the Campbell Farming Corporation, which has owned property in the East Mountains since 1937. “We are pleased to see this special part of Campbell Ranch become protected open space, and recognize the uniqueness of this property in providing great public access to the San Pedro Mountains landscape,” says Robert Gately, President of the Campbell Corporation. In addition to agreeing to sell the land for a low price, the Campbell Corporation has also agreed to make a cash donation to Santa Fe County that will help support the operations of the County Open Space and Trails Program. The Corporation will also provide an easement to allow additional access to highway 344 off of the Turquoise Trail Scenic Byway.

Santa Fe County’s Open Space and Trails Program has been responsible for the protection of approximately 6,000 acres of important lands and 34 miles of public trails spread across the County. The County’s program has received a number of awards and honors, including selection receiving the County Leadership in Conservation award in 2005 by the National Association of Counties and the nonprofit The Trust for Public Land.