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**SANTA FE STANDS TO ADVANCE NATIONAL MODEL OF INNOVATIVE,
ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

*The Board of County Commissioners will vote on the Village at
the Galisteo Basin Preserve's first development phase on February 9, 2010*

Santa Fe, NM, February 2, 2010—On February 9, the Santa Fe Board of County Commissioners (BCC) will be asked to advance the initial phase of a path-setting, environmentally responsible community plan, known as the Village at the Galisteo Basin Preserve. The mixed-use, mixed-income Village and the 13,522-acre Preserve have won national acclaim for integrating landscape-scale conservation, water and energy efficiency, and clustered community design. BCC approval of the Village Phase I preliminary plat would be a significant statement about the county's own emergent sustainable development-oriented management plans and development regulations.

"BCC approval would signal a strong challenge to 'business-as-usual' development," said Ted Harrison, president of Commonweal Conservancy, the Santa Fe-based nonprofit organization spearheading the Preserve. "The Village at the Galisteo Basin Preserve offers a model of inclusive, resource-conserving development planning. The Commission's approval would set a new standard for progressive, thoughtful development in Santa Fe County and the region."

Concerns about four variances from the current County Land Development Code have delayed a BCC hearing since the Phase I preliminary plat was submitted two years ago. After working closely with the Land Use Division, however, Commonweal is hopeful the variances will be characterized as "a minimal easing of the code" and protective of public safety, health, and welfare.

The variances enable the Village to accommodate compact neighborhood design, pedestrian safety, affordable housing, and ecologically sensitive, site-specific planning and development processes. They are essential to the project's vision, sustainable design priorities, and traditional neighborhood design plan—a plan to which county staff and consultants have pointed as the type of development they would like to encourage through the Sustainable Development Code.

The February 9 vote is an opportunity for the BCC to make a clear judgment on the community-building direction of Santa Fe County. With approximately 13,000 acres (96 percent) planned as protected open space, the Preserve also offers the county a chance to support the conservation of thousands of acres, the development of 50 miles of public trails, and the creation of a stewardship community that is actively engaged in the care and restoration of the Galisteo Basin.

The Village site occupies 300 acres within the 13,522-acre Preserve. Designed for economic and social diversity, it is proposed to include 965 homes of various types, sizes, and prices, with 30 percent for income-qualified buyers. Commercial, educational, and civic development aims to foster a dynamic, walkable urban core, while parks and pathways will connect neighborhoods and link to the larger Preserve. The BCC approved the Village master plan in 2007.

The Phase I plan anticipates 149 homes and 37,500 square feet of commercial and civic space, such as a small café, an environmental center, and a post office, as well facilities in the Village center for Tierra Encantada Charter High School (CS 37). The first phase will include parks, recreation areas, and open space, including a five-acre “memorial landscape” for green burial.

In June 2009, the Santa Fe County Development Review Committee unanimously approved the Phase I preliminary plat, supporting the following variance requests:

- allowing driveways to be within 100 feet of alleys and/or intersections to promote compact neighborhood design;
- increasing the maximum slope at intersections from 3 percent to 5 percent, and decreasing the intersection-approach length from 100 feet to 50 feet, to minimize excessive grading and promote compact neighborhood design;
- allowing narrower road-widths to encourage slower Village traffic, safer pedestrian conditions, and more interactive, tightly connected neighborhoods;
- accommodating a 30-foot building height in certain areas to present greater opportunities for passive solar heating and daylight exposure, accommodate more affordable housing, and support the Village’s compact urban design goals.

Already, Santa Fe County’s Open Space and Trails Program has invested in public open space associated with the Preserve, and Commonweal has mapped 14 miles of the Preserve’s public hiking, biking, and equestrian trails. Nonprofit partners, such as the Santa Fe Conservation Trust, Earth Works Institute, the Quivira Coalition, and Wild Earth Guardians, have helped advance important land restoration, wildlife habitat, range management, and conservation work in the Preserve. Affordable-housing organizations, green-building professionals, and neighboring communities and individuals have informed the Preserve and Village plans.

“A rich network of public, private, and nonprofit partnerships is creating greater capacity to care for this fragile landscape,” said Harrison. “The Village opens new opportunities for people to connect with each other and with this geography. Residents will become stewards of this land, protecting, interpreting, and healing their homeplace.”

About Commonweal Conservancy + the Galisteo Basin Preserve

Commonweal Conservancy is a nonprofit, conservation-based, community-development organization dedicated to sustaining relationships among people, land, and the built environment. Commonweal acquires properties of cultural and ecological significance and engages in collaborative land planning to create whole communities. For more information about Commonweal, visit CommonwealConservancy.org. For information about the Galisteo Basin Preserve, a nationally recognized 13,522-acre land-conservation and community-development initiative in central Santa Fe County, please visit GalisteoBasinPreserve.com

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