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**NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS ACQUIRES  
THE GALISTEO SPRINGS CONSERVATION EASEMENT**

280-acre parcel in the Galisteo Basin Preserve  
will be permanently protected through private-public partnership

**Santa Fe, NM, November 2, 2011**—The New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) has acquired a 280-acre conservation easement over the culturally and ecologically significant Galisteo Springs property in central Santa Fe County. In partnership with local nonprofit organizations Commonweal Conservancy and the Santa Fe Conservation Trust, DCA purchased the easement through capital outlay funds granted by the 2010 New Mexico State Legislature and administered by the New Mexico Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD).

“Our partnership with the Department of Cultural Affairs and the Santa Fe Conservation Trust guarantees permanent protection for this extraordinary cultural, ecological and recreational resource,” said Ted Harrison, president and founder of Commonweal Conservancy, the organization spearheading the 13,522-acre Galisteo Basin Preserve and the owner of the Galisteo Springs property. “This acquisition will support a more holistic understanding of the region’s cultural history, as well as conserve a freshwater resource of critical biological significance.”

The protection effort was forged from a partnership of local nonprofit organizations and state agencies. It leveraged the expertise and commitment of policy makers, conservation professionals, and concerned citizens to secure a powerful land conservation outcome for New Mexico residents and visitors. Valued at \$530,000, the highly restrictive conservation easement was conveyed by Commonweal to the DCA at a bargain sale price of \$350,000. The easement purchase was one of seven funded by ENMRD through a competitive process from among thirteen applicants.

“The state’s acquisition of this easement is an example of the best kind of public-private partnership that can help protect important landscapes in New Mexico,” said Dr. Eric Blinman, director of DCA’s Office of Archaeological Studies. “The Galisteo Springs’ deeply layered cultural sites distinguish the tract as an extraordinary example of New Mexico’s rich and complex history covering at least 7000 years.” Archaeological sites have been identified on the property ranging from Archaic residences to elaborate pre-Spanish fields to historic lime kilns.

The Santa Fe Conservation Trust, which maintains easements throughout the Preserve and elsewhere in northern New Mexico, will hold the Galisteo Springs conservation easement jointly with the DCA and will monitor the status of the property’s cultural, environmental, and recreational resources.

“We are really excited to be a part of this project,” said Charlie O’Leary, executive director of the SFCT. “The Galisteo Springs conservation easement will help to protect this important resource area for all time. With trails planned for the future, it also will be a place where the public can enjoy the beauty of the Galisteo Basin first-hand.”

In addition to its cultural resources, the Galisteo Springs is an area of unique habitat convergence; its water, wetlands, and grasses support migrating birds and resident mammals, amphibians, reptiles, and fish. It is surrounded by a collection of publicly held and privately managed conservation lands, including eleven properties within five miles that have been overlaid with conservation easements, and it connects adjacent state lands with Galisteo Basin Preserve open spaces to the east and west.

The Galisteo Springs conservation easement permanently prohibits building and subdivision, but it will allow hiking, cycling, and equestrian use along a three-mile trail corridor that will connect to the proposed 50-mile trail network within the Preserve. The DCA, Commonweal, and the SFCT will work with committed volunteers to craft a public access and stewardship program that will both introduce people to the resources of the area and enlist visitors in caring for them.

Combined with a 250-acre, \$470,000 conservation easement that Commonweal donated to the SFCT in October, the Galisteo Springs easement sale and the partnership with the state mark a significant step in the organization’s ambitious conservation vision for the Galisteo Basin Preserve.

### **About the Galisteo Basin Preserve**

The Galisteo Basin Preserve is a land-conservation and community-development initiative in central Santa Fe County that is spearheaded by Commonweal Conservancy. Through a carefully orchestrated program of conservation easements and limited development, the Galisteo Basin Preserve is designed to permanently protect more than 13,000 acres of open space, migratory wildlife habitat, native vegetation, and cultural resources in the Galisteo Basin. Publicly accessible trails, land-restoration projects, and green home construction in five conservation neighborhoods currently animate the Preserve. For more information, visit [www.galisteobasinpreserve.com](http://www.galisteobasinpreserve.com).

### **About Commonweal Conservancy**

Commonweal Conservancy is a nonprofit, conservation-based, community-development organization dedicated to forging deep and sustaining relationships among people, land, and the built environment. Commonweal acquires properties of cultural and ecological significance and engages in collaborative land planning that inspires the creation of whole communities. Since its founding in 2003, Commonweal has contributed more than \$3.6 million in land value donations to the Santa Fe Conservation Trust and Santa Fe County. The organization also has secured gifts of land and conservation easements valued at nearly \$5 million from other Galisteo Basin property owners.

### **About the Department of Cultural Affairs**

Established by the New Mexico Legislature in 1978, the Department of Cultural Affairs is New Mexico's cultural steward—charged with preserving and showcasing the state's cultural riches. With its eight museums, six historic monuments, arts, historic preservation, archaeology and library programs, New Mexico Cultural Affairs is among the most ambitious state cultural agencies in the nation. In addition to the administration of its facilities and public programs, the department serves as a unified and forceful voice for all of New Mexico's cultural resources, providing expertise and consultation to developing organizations, such as museums, arts councils and community libraries throughout the state. For more information, visit [www.newmexicoculture.org](http://www.newmexicoculture.org)

### **About the Santa Fe Conservation Trust**

Under the leadership of Dale Ball, Bill deBuys and Stewart Udall and other environmentalists, Santa Fe Conservation Trust was founded in 1993. A non-profit organization, the Trust is dedicated to providing permanent protection for open spaces and critical wildlife habitat in Santa Fe, Rio Arriba and San Miguel counties for the benefit of future generations. Among the Trust's accomplishments are creating and maintaining Santa Fe's Dale Ball and Rail Trail systems, protecting Atalaya and Sun mountains, and preserving more than 33,000 acres of land so that they'll remain as they are today—with clean air and water, starry skies and heart-stopping views. For further information, contact the Trust at 989-7019 or [info@sfct.org](mailto:info@sfct.org), or check out [www.sfct.org](http://www.sfct.org).

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