

PRE-DEVELOPMENT SITE CONDITIONS | 3.0

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Methodology

Comprehensive analyses of the Galisteo Basin Preserve's land use history and physiographic characteristics – including slope, solar aspect, climate, and surface hydrology, among other conditions – informed the development plan and conservation strategy for the Village at the Galisteo Basin Preserve.



Commonweal Conservancy compiled the Village site analysis with help from a team of planning, engineering, architectural, cartographic, geohydrological, and conservation professionals. Combining international expertise with local knowledge of planning policies and development requirements, the planners, landscape architects, engineers, archeologists, geologists, economists, attorneys and natural resource specialists that advised the master plan for the Village collaborated closely to prepare the studies, reports, maps, and diagrams presented here.

With generous support from Santa Fe County's Geographic Information System (GIS) staff, the visual, historic, and environmental attributes of the Preserve were painstakingly mapped and analyzed. Through a "land suitability" methodology first championed by Ian McHarg at the University of Pennsylvania, the physiographic attributes of the Preserve were delineated as discrete data layers and then were combined to generate an "opportunity and constraints composite map" of the Village development area. In turn, the opportunity and constraints composite map helped inform an assessment of the property's "carrying capacity" for human habitation and economic activity.

Historic Settlement Patterns

Eight hundred years ago, numerous large Pueblos of the Tano (Southern Tewa) were scattered throughout the Galisteo Basin. Agriculturists of the Southwest Puebloan tradition, the Tanos cultivated maize, squash, and other foods in rock mulch fields and bordered gardens, and hunted small game native to the region. During the mid to late 1300s, as many as ten to twenty thousand Puebloan people may have lived in the central Galisteo Basin.

One of the largest of the Tano towns, Pueblo de los Tanos, located approximately two miles northeast of the modern-day village of Galisteo, was the first in the Basin to have a Spanish mission. From its beginnings in 1610 to the Pueblo Revolt in 1680, the mission was run by a series of Franciscan padres then, along with the rest of the Basin, it was abandoned during the turmoil of the Revolt.

In 1799 Juan Aragon was given the first Spanish land grant in the central basin, and by 1816 a Spanish fortified village had been established on the Rio Galisteo a mile south of the old Pueblo. Around 1850, the village of Galisteo was moved another half-mile south, to its present location.

By the early 1920s, the Galisteo Basin's Spanish land grants were fragmented or entirely subsumed by an influx of non-Spanish speaking settlers. The Galisteo Basin was recast as a landscape of small, widely dispersed villages into a region dominated by large farms, ranches, and railroad towns.

Until the late 1960s, the land and water resources of the Galisteo Basin were dominated by a handful of ranching families whose properties ranged from 6,000 to more than 100,000 acres. Federal and state land holdings were scattered throughout the region – adding complexity and opportunity to residents' economic fortunes and quality of life.

Since 1970, a number of rural residential and large-scale suburban neighborhoods have been developed – accelerating the region's transformation from an agricultural economy to one increasingly service-oriented, white-collar and suburban. The subdivision of the Simpson Ranch in the 1970s set the stage for the Galisteo Basin's inevitable suburbanization. Eldorado de Santa Fe's 1 to 2.5-acre average lot size, combined with its far-reaching road network and complex of community facilities, brought new amenities and new challenges to the region. Eldorado's land use practice encouraged other developers to subdivide adjoining properties into "bedroom communities" of ten to 150 homes.



Figure 3.A - View from the Lamy Crest, looking south to the Galisteo Basin Preserve open space.