

LAS PLACITAS ASSOCIATION

2013 ANNUAL REPORT

Our goal is to protect open space, restore riparian watersheds, promote recreational, educational and rural activities, and engage the members of our community in appreciating the environmental and cultural richness of this area. We work with residents, land owners, developers and others to ensure Placitas retains its quality of life, adequate and clean water, clean air, dark skies, plant and animal diversity, scenic views, sites of archaeological significance and opportunities to learn about and enjoy our surroundings.

Events: 2013 was an especially rich year which included the following:

This year's **Placitas Star Party** with the Albuquerque Astronomical Society was again a great success. Hundreds of people turned out to enjoy this viewing of planets, galaxies and other astronomical features at the new Placitas Community Library venue. Thanks to the Placitas Community Library for providing great hospitality and extra-dark night skies!

LPA's Harvest Festival: About 60 visitors dropped by the Anasazi Fields Winery for great wines, to watch a presentation of "Birds of the Placitas Open Space" by Hart Schwarz, learn about bee keeping from Phill Remick, and enjoy ribbon-winning entries in the Baked Goods, Preserved Foods, and Garden Produce competitions. Crafts for sale included gourd art and jewelry.

Birds of the Placitas Open Space is always a favorite hike. The **Montezuma Crest Hike** gave participants a chance to see the view from the top (after a "mildly strenuous" climb). **Creating a Backyard Wildlife Habitat** taught us how to provide food, water and cover to attract wildlife and help restore habitat in our residential area.

LPA sponsored a field trip to **B. Ruppe's Drug Store** in Albuquerque's Barelas neighborhood. Ruppe Drugs has done business in downtown Albuquerque since 1883. We met with Maclovia Sánchez de Zamora, renowned yerbera, who prescribes herbs and oils and tinctures for what ails you. Ruppe's is a wonderland, an institution and a treasure.

Our 3rd annual **Sporting Gear Sale** to benefit LPA and Pathways Wild Life Corridors was a smashing success. Members of both LPA and Pathways were there to accept gently used gear to be sold and to accept donated items for the sale. Everything from a kayak to scuba diving equipment was for sale. Bikes and skis were quickly sold. Look for next year's sale date in the LPA calendar of events published in early 2014.

Once again, LPA worked with the City of Albuquerque Open Space Division to improve the trail system in the **Placitas Open Space**. This year we continued working toward our goal of creating a loop trail covering the entire open space. Trail work is a great way to see the open space, enjoy some outdoor work, and make this unique Placitas treasure even more valuable. LPA Board member Elise VanArsdale also organized school children to make and scatter more than 1,000 seed balls on the Placitas Open Space.

Community Advocacy:

Pipelines

In July of this year, the Bureau of Land Management approved the Enterprise Products Partners company's request to increase the flow of natural gas liquids in their pipeline that runs through Placitas from 11 million gallons per day to 14 million gallons per day. LPA has appealed BLM's decision to the Department of Interior (BLM's "parent") in Washington D.C., based on the agency's lack of a proper safety analysis. Of major concern is the insufficient armoring of the 1,000 feet of pipeline that runs down the main channel of Las Huertas Creek. Flooding has repeatedly damaged the pipe armoring and uncovered the pipes, which should never occur. The pipeline carries ethane, propane, butane and natural gasoline at pressures of over 1,000 pounds per square inch and a rupture could cause explosion, fire and groundwater contamination.

The Western Refining company is currently water pressure testing its nearly 60-year old crude oil pipeline for re-activation, perhaps in preparation for sale to another company. Western is replacing portions of their aging 16-inch pipe that have developed leaks. Their repair excavations can be seen along Camino de las Huertas and Tecolote Road near Highway 165. Of major concern here is the proximity of the pipeline to the Placitas Elementary School, the Community Center and residences as well as the possible switch of contents from crude oil to much more dangerous substances like gasoline.

Mining

The BLM is planning to release its 25-year long-range plan (the Rio Puerco Resource Management Plan) for its lands in Central New Mexico in February 2014. LPA and ES-CA formally objected to many items including BLM's inclusion of an additional 800 acres of gravel mines in the Mustang Mesa area of Placitas. This new mining would extend an existing 1,100 acre gravel mine farther south into residential Placitas. BLM did absolutely no environmental analysis for this proposal. LPA will monitor BLM's February plan release and will take appropriate action if it includes expanded gravel mining in Placitas.