Fall 2006
Issue 1

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City of El Paso Works to Create Open Space Plan

A private, non-profit organization dedicated to preserving the special places and wide-open spaces of West Texas and Southern New Mexico… forever

The Frontera Land Alliance
2626 N. Mesa, Suite 258
El Paso, TX 79902 USA

News from
The Frontera Land Alliance

Welcome New Members!

Over 80 Entries In the Save Our Arroyos! Group Exhibit

Welcome to the following artists who contributed to the success of the Save Our Arroyos! art show and became new members of The Frontera Land Alliance in the process. Artists in the exhibit included: **Janet Aboud, Clarrisa Adair, Bob Adams, Evelyn Ainsa, Teresa Altchul, Jim Andrew, Barbara Armijo, Sally Avant, Ben Avant, Natalie Baca, Louise Bagg, Don Beene, Peter Bullock, Holly Cox, Scott Cutler, Lelia Davis, Willibald de Cabrera, Rigoberto de la Mora, Rudolfo Escobar, Kelly Foss, Katie Foss, Pat Foss, Susan Frary, Kristina Freeman, Jane Friedman, Katie Gelinas, Anne Giangiulio, John Gore, Hannah Story Gore, Barbara Howe, Paul Hoylen, Maggie Kelly, Danielle Lopez, Doug Martin, Lisa Matta-Brown, Candy Mayer, Jean McGee, Ramie McIntosh-Scully, Dee Olga Min-Young Phillips, Ann Mitchell, Martha Moheno, Oscar Moya, Gerie Muchinkoff, Carmen Navar, Pat Olchefski-Winston, Eric Ozuna, James Paternoster, Louie Pedregon, Fr. Vincent Petersen, Jackson Polk, Jim Quinnan, Bill Rakocy, Krystyna Robbins, Demis Perla Rodriguez, Marie Rohde, Frida Rollo, Idell Rothstein, John Ryno, Marina Savitsky, Richard Schecter, Roxanne Schroeder, Bob Shepack, Joan Shepack, Tracy Solimeno, Corinne Abeyta-Spinnler, Jeniffer Stapher-Thomas, Bill Sullivan, Margaret Tumey, Carol Tures, John Tures, Lelaroy Williams, and Laura Zelenak.** Welcome!

This newsletter will keep you and the rest of Frontera's members informed about the group's activities and provide you with ways to get involved in protecting and connecting open space in West Texas and Southern New Mexico.

"Rain Trail" (above) by Jeniffer Stapher-Thomas, was selected to receive the **2006 Frontera Image Award** at the opening of the Group Exhibit at the **Hal Marcus Gallery** on July 27, 2006. The prize for winning was $100 but the real prize, at least for the Frontera Board of Directors, was gaining more than 80 new members through the art show entry process. That, and getting to choose an image to help promote Frontera and its mission! Thank you Hal Marcus Gallery and Jeniffer! ■

Land Trust Accreditation 101

An Explanation from the Land Trust Alliance

Land Trust Background & Purpose

In the late 19th century, Charles Eliot envisioned the formation of "an incorporated association [that] would be empowered by the state to hold small well-distributed parcels of land free of taxes, just as the public library holds books and the art museum pictures – for the use and enjoyment of the public."

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Accreditation

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In 1891, the Trustees of Reservation became the first such "association" and the nation's first regional land trust [in Massachusetts]. Museums, libraries, and land trusts have all come a long way in the intervening century, and are respected institutions in their communities.

Museums and libraries, along with zoos, universities, and many other types of organizations serving the public interest are able to gain professional recognition for their work through accreditation programs. In 2008, land trusts will join these ranks and be able to participate in a voluntary accreditation program designed for – and by – land trusts.

The accreditation program is governed by the 13-member Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance (LTA). The accreditation process will verify a land trust's implementation of 42 indicator practices from Land Trust Standards and Practices. The program was designed to build and recognize strong land trusts, foster public confidence in land conservation, and help ensure the long-term protection of land.

Benefits

The voluntary accreditation program will benefit participating land trusts by ensuring that they have strong organizational and conservation programs in place and publicly recognizing their accredited status.

The process of compiling, revising, and updating the documents to be reviewed as part of an application to the Commission will enable participating land trusts to have the best policies and protocols at their fingertips. This in turn will allow land trusts to be more consistent and efficient in their conservation work. Part of the evaluation process for accreditation will involve the review of randomly selected project files.

Attention to acquisition and stewardship documentation will help make sure that there are good records available to manage – and, if necessary, defend – conserved land.

The accreditation process will also evaluate whether land trusts have the resources in place to ensure that lands conserved today will remain protected in the future.

Accredited land trusts will also be able to display a "seal" indicating their accredited status. Over time, public recognition of this seal will help secure public, donor and regulatory agency confidence in land trust work. Maria Trunk, Board President, explains that "we are fortunate to be guided by the hard-won experience of other land trusts. By striving to maintain the high standards of the national accreditation program, Frontera's organization will be strengthened. Having the best policies and protocols at our fingertips will make us more consistent and efficient in our conservation efforts."

Accreditation and Training Program Design

The program's design is based on an extensive year-long public involvement process led by an LTA-commissioned Program Design Steering Committee. Over 1,000 comments from the land conservation community received in 2004-2005 were used to develop a fair, accessible, and credible process. Market research conducted in 2005 indicated that 80 percent of the country's land trusts intend to apply for accreditation.

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Thank you to Paper Chase Digital Printing & Copy Shop for their help with this newsletter!

Fall 2006 Events

Sept. 23–Nov. 4, 2006
Celebration of Our Mountains
Full Calendar Events at
www.CelebrationofOurMountains.org

September 30, 2006
7:30am-2pm Ardovino's Desert Crossing
Environmental Fair, Farmers Market
Raffle to be held at 1:30pm, no need to be present to win.

October 12-15, 2006
Nashville, TN
National Land Conservation Conference: Rally 2006
The largest gathering of land conservation leaders in the country! Sponsored by the Land Trust Alliance. More information is available at http://www.lta.org/training/rally.htm

October 29, 2006*
2-5pm, meet at parking lot at end of Alto Mesa
Resler Canyon Clean-Up
*Bring your gloves! Canyon caretaker Scott Cutler will give a brief talk on the natural history of arroyos before we set out to work.

Frontera Land Holdings
As of September 2006
•
Wakeem/Teschner Nature Preserve at Resler Canyon (approx. 91 acres in El Paso)
•
Colonia Vista parcel (approx. 5 acres near Vinton)

Accreditation

Continued from page 2

Concurrent with the design of the accreditation program, LTA also developed a comprehensive Standards and Practices Curriculum that will cover each of the 42 indicator practices. These courses will be a cornerstone resource for land trusts that wish to implement best practices in their land trusts. Courses are not required for accreditation, and as such cannot guarantee a land trust will achieve accreditation. Rather, LTA is creating these courses to open the doors to information that will help land trusts prepare for accreditation and be more successful in saving land. Six courses will be piloted in 2006 with the remaining piloted in 2007.

Accreditation Timeline

The accreditation program will start accepting applications in 2008. The Commission anticipates that most interested land trusts will complete the initial process by 2012. Accreditation will be renewed every 5 years.

The Commission was incorporated in April 2006, and this year will establish operating procedures and design the application requirements and review procedures. In 2007 it will test its procedures. As these activities unfold the Commission will provide regular updates to the land trust community. For up-to-date information about the Land Trust Accreditation Commission go to www.landtrustaccreditation.org.

Most recently, as the result of generous support from the Houston Endowment, the Texas Land Trust Council has introduced an innovative initiative called the Excellence Program, the aim of which is to help Texas land trusts strengthen their focus on Standards & Practices and better prepare for future accreditation.

One of the core components of the Excellence Program is a bi-monthly Standards & Practices Electronic Bulletin. Each Bulletin will cover a different topic, offer discussion and commentary, and provide links for additional resources and information. This first installment of the S&P E-Bulletin tackles a timely topic – tax benefits and appraisal issues.

We invite you to follow the link below to read the premier issue:
http://www.texaslandtrustcouncil.org/standards_practices/issue_1/

We'll keep you posted as we work toward a 2008 accreditation. ■

Frontera: 501c(3) in Texas & New Mexico

Frontera has had non-profit status in Texas for over a year and, as of January 2006, we are recognized as a non-profit in New Mexico. We are represented by the Southwest Environmental Center in Las Cruces. Donations from New Mexicans now qualify as donations to New Mexico-recognized charities for purposes of New Mexico state income tax, so our New Mexican supporters get a double benefit! (Texans, even though you pay no state income tax, we welcome your support, too!) ■

Richard Teschner (left) and Charlie Wakeem (right) enjoy the art at the Save the Arroyos! Group Exhibit at the Hal Marcus Gallery

What's Going On:

Teschner/Wakeem Nature Preserve at Resler Canyon

Resler Canyon worked like an arroyo should during the monsoons of early August 2006, although there was some scouring that took place near the south rim. Frontera is working with the City of El Paso to provide an easement for remediating that damage. Reminder: Resler clean up is October 29! ■

GET INVOLVED! **Want to make a difference? Frontera needs volunteers! For more information contact us at info@tfla.net or help us in the following ways:**

- **ADVISORY BOARDS provide assistance in managing and acquiring land holdings. Contact Charlie Wakeem at charliewak@sbcglobal.net**
- **ATTEND PUBLIC MEETINGS to report back to Frontera about decisions regarding open space. Contact Nancy Hanks at gofetch@sbcglobal.net**
- **HELP RAISE FUNDS for managing and acquiring open space. Contact Jamie Ackerman at benjaminackerman@sbcglobal.net**

THE FRONTERA LAND ALLIANCE 2006 BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Maria Trunk, President
Kevin Von Finger, Vice-President
Scott Cutler, Secretary
Jamie Ackerman, Treasurer
Nancy Hanks, Newsletter editor
Chuck Kooshian
Amy Schoemaker
Charlie Wakeem

Scott Cutler Rides to Columbus, NM… and Back, for $2000!

On July 12, 2006, our own Frontera Board Member and treasurer Scott Cutler rode his bicycle to Columbus, NM, and back to El Paso. Here's the report from his "sag" driver, wife Miki: "Temp was around 101. Bike ride started at 6:00 am and finished at 6:30 p.m. with a lunch break of 20-30 min. in Columbus. The sag wagon was Maria Trunk, Miki and Andy Cutler, and Dee Chriss, who all caught up with Scott at the train station in Columbus and again on the way back at about 30 miles from the end of his ride. Scott saw the moon set and the sunrise in the morning, he saw tarantulas crossing the road and a cow carcass on the side of the road picked clean, lots of birds and National Guard moving on Hwy 9 (Columbus hwy). Scott was very tired at the end of the ride and it took him about 3 hours to recover. He was not sore the next day. He raised over $2000 dollars for Frontera." Thank you, Scott, and thank you Scott's supporters! ■

City of El Paso Works to Create Open Space Plan

Several Frontera board members are serving on the City of El Paso's Open Space Advisory Group (OSAG) to help craft a first ever citywide Open Space Plan. Their task is to consider all open spaces, parks, trails, and greenways and integrate them into an organized, interconnected system to be assembled over the next 30 years.

The plan starts with a vision of what El Paso should look like thirty years from today. That vision and the OSAG's initial concept maps are available at http://www.elpasotexas.gov/green_infrastructure/default.asp. Once the maps are finalized, the OSAG and ultimately City Council must make some hard decisions about how to acquire and administer the land. Fortunately, the City of El Paso already owns many square miles of land around the Franklin Mountains, under the control of the El Paso Water Utility. We hope Frontera can help make this ambitious plan a reality. ■

….BULLETIN….BULLETIN….

The U.S. Army is proceeding with their plans to open the majority of Fort Bliss to off-road maneuver, excluding Otero Mesa and the Sacramento and Organ Mountains. A draft of the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement is due out this fall and will be available at the Fox Branch El Paso Public Library, the Alamogordo Public Library, and the New Mexico State University Library. See https://www.bliss.army.mil for details. ■

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