



2021-22 ANNUAL REPORT the RE-GENERATION





from the ground, UP.

Dear Friends & Supporters,

This year has been one of deep reflection as we head into our 35th year. As we come out of the most challenging few years of our existence, we are moved by all the ways in which our community has boosted each other to do more with less, protect what we have and invest in our future.

We know that everything seems a bit harder this year - demands are higher, supplies are lower, materials are costlier. We also know that without each other, all of these challenges seem insurmountable. But, we manage to persevere! This year we grew more food for our Vista Grande families, expanded our education programs and restored more agricultural land than ever before.

We can't do any of this without your support and investment in the land trust. Together we protect the lands we love and build lasting connections with the land now and forever.

Por La Tierra

Kristina Orteza, TLT Executive Director

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The **Taos Land Trust** established the first land trust in New Mexico nearly 35 years ago, using conservation easements to permanently protect lands. This strategy remains as one of the best tools to protect our sacred and precious landscapes. 35 years later, we've protected more than 27,000 acres of prime agricultural lands, open space and critical habitat all over northern New Mexico. **FOREVER!** To learn more, visit: [**taoslandtrust.org/conservation-easements**](https://taoslandtrust.org/conservation-easements)

MONITORING SEASON 2022

Every year we monitor each easement — 53 in all over 9,000 acres across northern New Mexico. This year is no different. More than 8 volunteers, visited each of our easements to ensure the property is maintaining conservation values. We are so grateful for volunteers. Sign up to become one at [**info@taoslandtrust.org**](mailto:info@taoslandtrust.org)

HUSTON CONSERVATION EASEMENT

This 7.9 acre property located in Des Montes is the newest addition to Taos Land Trust's family of easements. Owned by Allegra Huston, this property protects key agriculture and scenic open space in a high-risk development area. We are thrilled to see this property continue to preserve the land ethic that makes northern New Mexico so special.

Conservation **EASEMENTS**

Working Lands in **WORKING HANDS**

It's really all about **soil resilience**. And we know that we are nothing without healthy soils - it's the basis for growing healthy, organic food and feed. This program is focused on regenerative agricultural methods to bring our depleted soils back to life for a more productive future.

Our **no-till seed drill** was especially active this year, seeding diverse cover crop and grain mixes on nearly 300 acres of lands all around Taos County. The best demonstration of this work is at Cornelio Basin, a Town of Taos owned property that's a critical part of the Rio Fernando watershed. A joint effort between the Town of Taos, the Taos Land Trust and the Vigil y Romo Acequia Association, this 20 acre parcel is in its third year of soil restoration with cover crop seeding.



We knew tea was beneficial, but like this? At TLT we're teaching our young ecologists and farmers how to improve soil health by applying a compost tea made here at Rio Fernando Park. This tea starts with high-quality compost suspended in a tank of water, then microbial foods are added, and the whole tank is aggressively aerated to ensure that beneficial aerobic organisms are present in the brew. This tea is teeming with living microbes that once applied, can form symbiotic associations with plant roots to enhance their ability to thrive.





Rio Fernando GARDEN, WETLAND AND FOOD FOREST

We made great progress at the Vista Grande Gardens at Rio Fernando Park! Our interns and Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) members pushed themselves to finalize the **Wash and Pack station**, making it fully functional by working with experts to install sinks and plumbing. At the end of the growing season we produced **4,000 pounds of organic healthy produce** cycled back into the high school cafeteria for lunch! **ADA compliant picnic tables** for both students and park visitors with wood sourced from invasive trees, **a new compost greenhouse**, and **bio char kiln** are among the most impressive projects completed this year by our steady, motivated youth crews!

In its second year, our **Food Forest** project grew in an assortment of new trees, shrubs and groundcover implemented through a combination of YCC crew work and three public workshops led by Mike Musialowski. We've been documenting its progress in video footage and interviews, and look forward to assembling a short piece in 2023 that will explore the particular application of permaculture practices tuned to the conditions of the Northern New Mexico environment.

Our collaborators at **NM Native Plant Society** Taos Chapter established a native plant demonstration garden just outside their greenhouse at Rio Fernando Park. The goal of these gardens is to showcase the role that native plants play in our ecosystems, and the techniques for planting them out in the landscape. All the plants need irrigation to start, but being adapted to the semi-arid SW region, they should need little irrigation assistance to survive.

A person wearing a dark jacket and a hat is walking from right to left in the foreground. In the background, there is a wooden picnic shelter with picnic tables, and a large white tent-like structure. The ground is covered with dry grass and some snow. The title "Educating OUTDOORS" is overlaid on the image in a yellow-green font.

Educating OUTDOORS

Kids on the Land: YCC and Emerging Farmers and Ecologists

We are proud of our ongoing education efforts at Rio Fernando Park. This was our fourth year hosting hands-on experiential learning with community partners. In 2022, three youth crews joined us during the spring, summer and fall, where they learned sustainable farming techniques, hard science data collection through our long term monitoring program, and how to engage in community efforts — and most importantly leadership skills to last a lifetime. Here's a snapshot of accomplishments:

- Supported efforts to beaver deceiver pond leveler at Baca Park to maintain beaver habitat while protecting Town of Taos infrastructure
- Helped restore the Duran Molino with Taos Historical Society
- Learned critical agricultural skills at Red Willow and Morningstar Farms
- Assisted in the Farm to School garden at Enos Garcia Elementary School
- Harvested apples at NMSU Alcalde
- Participated in the initial planning data gathering efforts by Groundwork studio and Zero-E design for our landscape re-design and schoolhouse
- Collected data on forest stewardship in San Cristobal with David Gilroy of Taos Soil & Water Conservation District

2022 BY THE NUMBERS

4000 LBS OF FOOD HARVESTED

25 YCC CORPSMEMBERS OVER **6** MONTHS

9 ADDITIONAL ACRES PROTECTED UNDER EASEMENT

300 ACRES OF SOIL RESTORED IN TAOS COUNTY

4 COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS AND EVENTS

April 18: Healthy Soils Workshop included a no-till seeding demonstration, cover crop selection and field-based soil testing led by David Gilroy and Gwen Pieper.

June 18: Drought Summit brought a diverse group of people together to discuss strategies for creating community wide resilience to drought.

October 2 and 29: Food Forest Workshops at Rio Fernando Park

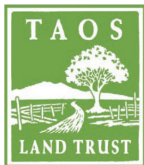
Looking AHEAD

Thanks to the **NM State Outdoor Recreational Division**, TLT was awarded a grant to make some major improvements at Rio Fernando Park. Here's what's coming in 2023:

- We are thrilled to be designing a hyper-efficient state-of-the-art 21st century Smart Schoolhouse building with Joaquin Karcher, a renowned zero-emissions architect. Fundraising for construction begins in late 2023.
- Award-winning landscape designer Amy Bell and her team at Groundworks Studio are doing a massive landscape redesign project that will help us build a park that really works for our community!
- Major infrastructure improvements. Look for an educational kiosk, more signage, welcoming benches and better trails that will enhance the public's ability to enjoy the land in all seasons.

Stay tuned for updates on our more-active-than-ever social media @taoslandtrust.





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