



VISION DRAFT, VERSION 1, MARCH 2004

# The Galisteo Watershed: A Vision for the Future

**B**ounded by Rowe Mesa, the Estancia Basin Escarpment, and the Ortiz Mountains to the South; the Sunlit Hills, the heights of Rancho San Marcos, and the Cerrillos Hills in the North; the Galisteo Watershed sweeps downward from Thompson Peak to the Rio Grande, creating a large basin spanning three counties and encompassing 730 square miles.

**T**his watershed (as that is how we shall refer to it) does not exist in isolation. It is continuously affected by activities in and around it. Different initiatives are competing for limited resources while (sub) urban development is expanding into the watershed at a rate of approximately 500 homes a year. The watershed is a fragile environment, able to sustain, and alternately not sustain, its residents. This historical perspective is a warning that it is critical to plan for the social, economic, and ecological future of the watershed. To undertake such planning, people who care about the Galisteo Watershed - landowners, residents, and stakeholders - came together to learn about the watershed and to say what is their shared vision.

**O**n February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2004, an all-day meeting was graciously hosted by **Vista Clara Ranch Resort and Spa**. The meeting was sponsored by EarthWorks Institute, Santa Fe County Planning Division, and the Santa Fe Conservation Trust, and facilitated by The Community Store. The day was divided into two parts. In the morning people learned about the general history of human habitation in the watershed, ecological challenges that human occupation presents, and what is entailed in community watershed planning. During the second half of the day participants had the opportunity to say what it is about the watershed that they treasure, and how they picture a desirable future for the watershed.

**T**he meeting participants asked the core group that planned the meeting to summarize the results, including a draft vision statement for the Galisteo Watershed. What follows in this report is the draft vision statement for the Galisteo Watershed.

**S**top! Help! Please! As you read the following, keep in mind that it is a **DRAFT**. We have tried our best to represent what 50 people said. That is hard to do and we have

likely made mistakes. Please let us know what we have left out or misstated.

**A** shared vision will be the primary building block to create a plan for the watershed. After your input, we will meet with others who were not at the meeting to see what they think of the draft. We are seeking widespread input into the creation of the vision statement. On June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2004, a second large community meeting will convene people to outline how the detailed planning for the watershed will be done.

**O**ne last request. We want to reach people who were not at the meeting on February 28<sup>th</sup>. We have to figure out how to involve the diversity of the population within the basin - youth and residents of all communities and cultures. Help us do that. Share this report with your neighbors and friends, and tell us who else should see and respond to the vision and how we can reach them.

Your contact for sending comments is:  
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## The Complete Meeting Summary

A full report of the meeting is available on the Santa Fe County website:

[www.santafecounty.org](http://www.santafecounty.org) as a PDF file. Look for the *Galisteo Watershed Collaborative Planning* link under **News and Headlines**.

You can request either a paper or digital copy from Beth Mills, County Planner, 505-995-2727. The report contains:

- The full meeting summary
- Handouts including:
  - What is a watershed
  - Examples of watershed planning
  - The Galisteo Watershed Restoration Action Strategy Draft
  - Wet and dry cycles in NM
- A historical timeline of the Galisteo
- A participant list

# The Galisteo Watershed: A Vision for the Future

## LESSONS LEARNED

The history of the watershed reveals lessons for current and future planning.

- Lessons from the past have largely gone unheeded.
- Water has been essential to human habitation in the past and is likely to be the key influence in the future.
- The watershed reflects the changing reality of New Mexico. Extraction has been a dominant feature of the watershed's past, but no longer is an economic reality.



- The watershed tells the story of a long history of migration, where people took what they needed from the land. Environmental impacts have compounded over time. How can the current inhabitants more sensitively live in balance with the natural surroundings?
- The people in the watershed have been adversely impacted by decisions made outside of the watershed.
- Technology and affluence enabled expansion in the watershed that exceeds the capacity of a fragile and dynamic environment.
- People have come to the watershed because they were enchanted by the promise it represented. They had dreams that were larger than what the watershed could support.

*In planning for the future of the watershed, how can we deal with some of these lessons?*

*For example, what will the new economy in the watershed be?*

*And how might water transfers affect the future of development in the watershed?*

## TREASURES

Residents and stakeholders of the watershed treasure:

- ◆ The natural beauty of the landscape (open space, vistas, night skies, solitude).
- ◆ Access to open space.
- ◆ Wildlife.
- ◆ The Galisteo River.
- ◆ A diverse, functioning ecosystem.
- ◆ That the people who live in the watershed are independent thinkers, engaged, and environmentally conscious. Many people live in a way that is connected to the land.
- ◆ The relaxed rural character.
- ◆ The rich historic and cultural heritage.



# The Galisteo Watershed: A Vision for the Future

## THE FUTURE

Residents and stakeholders of the watershed share common values that are the foundation to creating a desirable future.

People who live in the Galisteo watershed want to protect the natural beauty of the land – open spaces, vistas, night skies, wildlife, and solitude. They treasure the creeks that run through the sparsely populated landscape. They want to maintain small scale communities with a culturally diverse group of independent, environmentally conscious neighbors, many of whom live connected to the land. They value the unique historic and cultural heritage of the watershed.



The watershed is a microcosm of the inter-mountain West. Like the rest of the region, people living within the watershed have not heeded the lessons from their past. Climactic cycles and the resulting availability (and lack) of water – and how that water has been managed – is a large part of the reason why the watershed has sustained and not sustained its residents. The economy of the watershed in the past was based on extractive industries that no longer

provide an economic engine for the local population. The new economy is a variation on the historic attraction (or is it extraction?) of the watershed – the enchantment with the place and the subsequent value of the land for residential development.

The challenge for the people living in the watershed is how they can live in balance with a fragile, impermanent environment. Thus, what should guide how people in the watershed plan for the future?

- ◆ Growth for commercial and residential development should be ecologically sensitive.
- ◆ Open spaces and the sense of open space must not be compromised by growth. What growth does occur should use smart growth strategies, including cluster development and mixed use. Ideally, open spaces and villages will be interconnected by trails and public transportation.
- ◆ Strategies should be undertaken to conserve and preserve important ecological areas.
- ◆ Water availability should limit all plans for growth.
- ◆ Appropriate technologies - such as water catchment systems, recycling water, and high tech waste water systems - should be required.

*The meeting on 2/28/04 was titled **Paradox and Promise**. Given our vision, how can we reconcile potential conflicts in planning for the future? For example:*

- ◆ *What is the role of government with regards to activities such as open space preservation and land use management?*
  - ◆ *Who should be responsible for open space preservation strategies?*
  - ◆ *What is the right way to plan for the extent and nature of urban development?*
  - ◆ *How can we both protect and integrate private property rights into the planning vision?*
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- ◆ New construction and restoration of existing buildings should utilize environmentally friendly designs and reflect environmental limits.
  - ◆ The watershed should be restored so that the riparian areas are healthy, water flows in the river, and wildlife is abundant. Watershed restoration will require land management strategies such as rotational grazing, grassland restoration, and storm-water management.
  - ◆ Archeological sites should be protected.
  - ◆ There is a need for a healthy, local economy that fits the custom and culture of the watershed: small-scale, clean, and locally-owned.
  - ◆ Residents of the watershed should participate in decisions likely to affect them.
  - ◆ Local decision-making should be the product of regional cooperation reflecting a watershed orientation.
  - ◆ Continuing environmental education – especially for youth – should be a commitment of the communities within the watershed.



# The Galisteo Watershed: A Vision for the Future

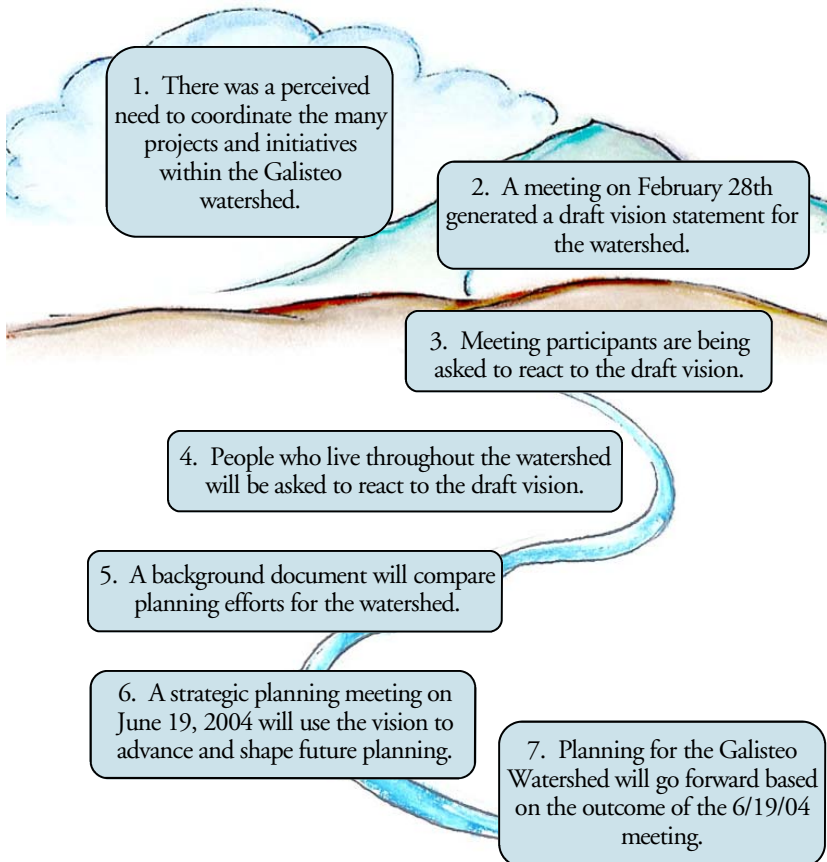
## Why Should I Get Involved?

This is a unique process. It is trying to plan based on the watershed, because that makes the most environmental and geographical sense. The goal is to focus on the whole region—how the environment, communities, agencies and individuals are all interconnected—and how the planning initiatives and other activities currently happening in the Galisteo Watershed can work together.

- ◆ Read and react to the draft vision statement. Tell us how it can be improved.
- ◆ Share the draft vision with your family, neighbors and friends.
- ◆ Let us know how we can reach people who did not come to the 2/28/04 meeting.
- ◆ STAY INVOLVED! Plan now to attend the meeting on June 19th.



## A Planning Process Map



## Who Is Organizing This Effort ?

*Please feel free to contact any of us for more information or about why we are involved.*

### The Earth Works Institute

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