

Taos Land Trust expands scope

Staff report

The Taos News, 7/9/2015

The Taos Land Trust has hired a new stewardship coordinator and is preparing to gather public input on a series of initiatives that will help shape the regional landscape for years to come.

Involved in preserving open spaces since 1989, the Land Trust hopes to foster further connections between community and land by creating opportunities for people to enjoy the outdoors.

Matthew van Buren, former assistant editor of *The Taos News*, started his new job as stewardship coordinator with the Land Trust, June 16. He will join Executive Director Kristina Ortez de Jones and Donor Services and Communications Manager Nina Anthony at the local nonprofit.

Van Buren left Taos in 2013 for Wisconsin where he earned his master's degree in public affairs at UW-Madison. As stewardship coordinator, van Buren will be leading community conservation efforts, including preparing and monitoring conservation easements, and engaging the public on various conservation and recreation projects.

Among them are a "Greenprint" and Conceptual Trails Plan for Taos County that will be spearheaded by the Trust for Public Land. Resulting maps and plans will describe cultural, environmental, agricultural and recreational assets throughout the county and identify community conservation priorities. The Taos Land Trust will play a significant role in the effort and intends to supplement the maps and plans with extensive qualitative data gathered from community members.

The Taos Land Trust is also beginning work on a Trail and Parks Master Plan, which will similarly require substantial community involvement as it moves ahead.

With the goal of encouraging robust community engagement, the Taos Land Trust will be reaching out to members of the public, as well as organizations and elected officials, in Taos and adjacent counties. The first in a series of meetings regarding the Greenprint and Conceptual Trails Plan will be held in late July. The Land Trust will also be organizing a volunteer trail crew in the coming months.

"Taos Land Trust is lucky to have both Matthew and Nina to help us steer the organization in the right direction," Ortez de Jones said in a prepared statement. "We are excited to engage the community in this region-wide conservation effort after a challenging transition period."

To inquire about creating a conservation easement, volunteering or participating in upcoming planning meetings, or for more information, visit taoslandtrust.org, contact the Taos Land Trust by phone at (575) 751-3138 or by email at info@taoslandtrust.org.



Matt van Buren