

SANTA FE GREEN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

RESOLUTION

A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE PERMANENT PRESERVATION OF THE CAJA CULTURAL
LANDSCAPE AND WILDLIFE AREA.

WHEREAS, the Outdoor Industry Association indicates that in 2021 the Outdoor Recreation Economy accounted for 1.9% of the nation ' s GDP and generated 4.5 million jobs; and ¹

WHEREAS, according to the New Mexico Economic Development Department, the Outdoor Recreation Industry in 2021 is responsible for 2.1% of the State's GDP and \$1.2B in wages and salaries; and ¹

WHEREAS, Headwater Economics indicates that at least 65% of New Mexico residents participate in outdoor recreation each year; and³

WHEREAS, Santa Fe County has an ideal climate for year-round outdoor activ ities; and

WHEREAS, Ecotourism and outdoor recreation is an important growth area for Santa Fe County ; and

WHEREAS, promoting Santa Fe County as a recreational destination for young people and families could supple ment the traditional arts-based tourism associated with an older populat io n; and

WHEREAS, Santa Fe County has an incredible array of public lands that encompass a stunning wea lth of landscapes that are enjoyed by residents and non-resident s alike; and

WHEREAS, the Caja de! Rio is lo cated on 1 06,883 acres of Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service public lands in north-central New Mexico and it is considered one of the United States ' most ic o n i c la nds capes, an area of profound cultural, historical, arche ologic al and ecological significance ; and

WHEREAS, the Caja del Rio is a landscape of dramatic topography with geological processes that stem from the

¹ <https://www.bea.gov/news/2022/outdoor-recreation-satellite-account-us-and-states-2021>

² <https://www.bea.gov/news/2022/outdoor-recreation-satellite-account-us-and-states-2021>

³ <https://edd.newmexico.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/20HE NM Outdoor Rec Repol i R3 BP web- 1 . pdf>

Rio Grande rift and that has boundaries stretching from the northwestern boundary of the Rio Grande to the southern and western boundaries of the La Bajada escarpment, Santa Fe River, and Canada Ancha; and

WHEREAS, the Caja del Rio contains two dynamic watersheds - the Santa Fe River Canyon and the Rio Grande corridor from Buckman to Cochiti Lake - and both watersheds have critical cultural, hydrological, ecological, agricultural, and economic significance; and

WHEREAS, the Caja del Rio is one of the most remarkable natural landscapes in the American Southwest with cactus forests, birds ranging from burrowing owls to bald eagles, herds of deer and elk, black bears, and cougars; and

WHEREAS, the Caja del Rio has been a critical habitat to wildlife for millennia and a wide variety of bird and animal species continue to use the area as a migratory corridor, breeding grounds, and an area of relocation during wildfires and changing climates; and

WHEREAS, in connecting various mountain ranges and wildlife habitats, the Caja del Rio acts as a cornerstone for wildlife connectivity and is essential for maintaining wildlife movement throughout the Upper Rio Grande; and

WHEREAS, preserving the Caja del Rio is critical for sustaining the City's rich and diverse cultures, traditions, heritage, and the vibrant community we are blessed to collectively share; and

WHEREAS, the Caja del Rio plateau has been inhabited by native and Indigenous communities since time immemorial and,

WHEREAS, the Caja del Rio is recognized by various Pueblos' traditional leadership as a significant region of cultural properties where Pueblo ancestors-built housing structures, ceremonial kivas, roads, irrigation infrastructure, petroglyphs and other cultural artifacts; and

WHEREAS, the Pueblos maintain an ongoing connection and use of the Caja del Rio landscape and its cultural resources, and sacred sites through story, song, pilgrimage, and prayer, and preserving the landscape is critical for ongoing cultural religious access and use; and

WHEREAS, the Caja del Rio also is the key landscape demarcation between what the Spanish colonial world termed the "Rio Abaja" and "Rio Arriba" regions of New Mexico, where the people of Santa Fe's traditional Hispanic villages maintain deep ties and living roots as "Ejido" (communal) through perpetuation and practice of traditional uses of flora and fauna and by pilgrimage and prayer; and

WHEREAS, the Caja del Rio Hispanic communities, including Jacona, Agua Fria, La Cieneguilla, La Cienega, La

Bajada and Santa Fe's Southsides remain deeply connected to the Caja del Rio and act as living repositories of traditional ecological and cultural knowledge of the area; and

WHEREAS, the Santa Fe Green Chamber of Commerce recognizes the importance of traditional livestock production on the Caja del Rio plateau and supports continued responsible range management activities, has been conducted through the cooperation of cattle growers and livestock permittees, traditional *merced* and acequia communities as political subdivisions of New Mexico, and federal agencies; and

WHEREAS, the Caja del Rio is still used by the Pueblo Nations and traditional Hispano communities to exercise traditional land use values including the following; hunting, fishing, grazing, wood gathering, pinion harvesting, herb and plant gathering, sacred pilgrimage and the historic community use of the land in other traditional ways; and

WHEREAS, the Caja del Rio also contains a major and historically significant travel corridor along the National historic Trail of El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro, an important trade route that according to the National Park Service ran from Mexico City to the Pueblo of Ohkay Owingeh, New Mexico from 1598 to 1881; and

WHEREAS, various petroglyphs and archeological sites found along El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro and throughout the Caja del Rio speak to the arrival, presence, history, culture and influence of the Spanish in the area; and

WHEREAS, residents and spiritual leaders throughout the Santa Fe and the United States recognize the sacred value of the Caja del Rio and utilize the area as a place of prayer, silence, solitude, worship and sacred pilgrimage; and

WHEREAS, in the early 1900s, the main travel corridor of El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro along the Caja del Rio transformed to become famous for its iconic stretches of New Mexico Highway 1 and ultimately Route 66; and

WHEREAS, the Caja del Rio also serves as a critical landscape in creating a historical, cultural, ecological, and eco-tourism corridor, connecting Bandelier National Monument and the adjacent sites of Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks National Monument, El Rancho de Las Golondrinas and the Leonora Curtin Wetland Preserve; and

WHEREAS, the New Mexico Heritage Preservation Alliance has listed the Caja del Rio as one of the "most endangered places" in New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, the federal agencies with jurisdiction over the area have provided insufficient management and resources to patrol, monitor and protect the many antiquities within the Caja del Rio; and

WHEREAS, Pueblo Nations with a deep connection to the Caja del Rio would like for the federal government to provide the protections needed to preserve and protect traditional Native sacred sites as well as maintain Pueblo access

and co-stewardship of these sites; and

WHEREAS, the Santa Fe Green Chamber of Commerce believes the Caja del Rio should become an important experiential learning "classroom" for the area's surrounding youth and a place to teach children the cultural, historical, ecological, geological, hydrological and biological aspects of this remarkable landscape; and

WHEREAS, portions of the Caja del Rio have tremendous potential for sustainable outdoor recreation to create the jobs and enhance local economies, so long as these regulated activities do not adversely impact the cultural, hydrological and ecological resources of the landscape; and

WHEREAS, the Santa Fe Green Chamber of Commerce believes that access to the Caja del Rio and surrounding protected public lands and the other outdoor recreation opportunities give local businesses an advantage over other states when attracting and retaining talent; and

WHEREAS, access to the Caja del Rio and surrounding protected public lands and outdoor recreation opportunities support healthy communities of which local business is the backbone. Studies show that access to the outdoors supports reduced crime rates, improves educational outcomes, and improves physical and mental health; and ⁴

WHEREAS, a healthy workforce improves the economy and according to the Centers for Disease control, physical inactivity costs the nation \$11.7B a year for related healthcare; and⁵

WHEREAS, the permanent protection of the Caja del Rio will help New Mexico reach the 30 by 30 goals of the America the Beautiful initiative and New Mexico's 30 by 30 Executive Order No. 2021-52, focused on protecting biodiversity and conserving 30% of lands and waters by 2030; and

WHEREAS, the Caja del Rio protection efforts are locally driven and led, characterized by community collaboration that supports priorities of Tribal Nations, while also engaging other local stakeholders; and

WHEREAS, the All Pueblo Council of Governors, the City of Santa Fe and Santa Fe County have all approved resolutions supporting the permanent protection of the Caja del Rio.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SANTA FE GREEN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, that the Santa Fe Green Chamber of Commerce supports the permanent protection, long-term preservation and responsible stewardship of the Caja del Rio landscape through an appropriate federal

⁴https://edd.newmexico.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/20HE_NM_Outdoor_Rec_Report_R3_BP_web-1.pdf

⁵[Health and Economic Costs of Chronic Diseases](#) | [CDC](#)

land use designation.

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED that the Santa Fe Green Chamber of Commerce supports the collaboration, co-management , and co-stewardship of the Caja del Rio among responsible federal agencies, the local governments of traditional Hispano communities, and sovereign Tribal Nations for the protection and preservation of this precious natural and cultural landscape.

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED that the Santa Fe Green Chamber of Commerce supports all efforts to empower Pueblo Nations and traditional Hispano communities in performing meaningful cultural interpretation, environmental education and historical preservation of the treasured landscape .

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED that the Santa Fe Green Chamber of Commerce supports co-stewardship and responsible management of wildlife and the wild environs of the Caja de! Rio Plateau, for the benefit of the public today, and for future generations .

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED that the Santa Fe Green Chamber of Commerce supports the continuation and sustainment of traditional uses of the Caja del Rio including the following; hunting, fishing, grazing, wood gathering, pinion harvesting, herb and plant gathering, sacred pilgrimage, and the historic community use of the land in other traditional ways.

SIGNED


Glenn Schiffbauer – Executive Director

Date 11/21/2022