



THE LOWDOWN / **Outdoors**



Terry Sullivan leads a hike at the Santa Fe Canyon Preserve, where you might see asters, mule deer, and a hooded warbler.



Pocket of Paradise

The Santa Fe Canyon Preserve shelters beavers, frogs, trees, and hikers. *By Kate Nelson*

On mornings when Terry Sullivan leads hikes at the Santa Fe Canyon Preserve, he pauses on a particular rise and asks his guests to *shhh*, listen, and watch. “First you hear this enormous serenade of northern leopard frogs,” he says. “It echoes off the hillsides. And then you walk down into a little area where you first see signs of beaver dams.”

Over the past 21 years, the Nature Conservancy has turned this 525-acre pocket off Upper Canyon Road into an ecological success story. Site of Santa Fe’s Victorian-era dams for drinking water and irrigation, it had devolved into a mudflat after newer reservoirs were built farther up the Santa Fe River. Enter the Nature Conservancy, a nonprofit group that oversees properties all over the world, including a handful in New Mexico.

Volunteers and staff like Sullivan, the conservancy’s state director, began planting cottonwoods and river willows. “The whole ecosystem came back,” he says, although they can’t explain exactly why. “It just exploded.”

Nestled two miles from the busy Santa Fe Plaza, the preserve includes a gentle 1.5-mile trail that loops through the wetland, beneath shady trees, past the 1881 Old Stone Dam, and over the 1893 Two-Mile Dam. Views extend up into the Sangre de Cristo Mountains and are especially glorious, Sullivan says, when autumn illuminates the leaves.

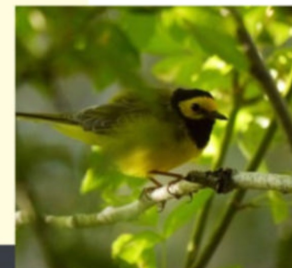
More than 30,000 people a year visit the preserve—a phenomenon, given the site’s anonymity among many residents. The conservancy plans to attract even more by making trails that accommodate wheelchairs, adding bilingual signage, and improving the packed parking lot.

The trail intersects the city’s vast Dale Ball trail system, so you can extend your mileage, but take note: Dogs aren’t welcome in the preserve, as

they might disturb the beavers. To see that critter, Sullivan recommends coming in the morning or evening, late April to late September. Park yourself on a bench along the upper portion of the trail, then *shhh*, listen, and watch.

Wild Things

The Santa Fe Canyon Preserve, at the intersection of Upper Canyon Road and Cerro Gordo Road, is open from dawn to dusk. Park only in the lot, not on the streets. The Nature Conservancy will resume guided hikes when it’s safe to do so. nmmag.us/canyonpreserve



JACKIE HALL (2), ALAN ECKERT, BERNARD FOY



Overnight

Pioneer Spirit

A rustic Red River resort gets a modern update. *By Molly Boyle*

After the Old Red River Pass Road was carved out of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains in 1915, motorists from Oklahoma and Texas poured into Red River every summer. Their endgame? Superb trout fishing and cool mountain air.

In 1920, Pioneer Lodge was built to capitalize on the new tourist trade. The rustic resort included 18 cabins—some repurposed from a nearby Boy Scout camp—a fishing pond, and a spacious house.

A century later, new Pioneer Lodge owner Matt Dietz has renovated eight cabins and the house for the next generation of visitors. New furniture, finishes, and whitewashed shiplap walls complete the resort's "modern farmhouse feel," says Dietz, who acquired the property in late 2018. "They're still the smaller cabins people would expect from a 100-year-old lodge, but they're brightened up."

A circa-1930s Burlington Northern railroad caboose houses the Steam Coffee & Tea Co., which features pour-over coffee, smoothies, and light breakfast and lunch items. A new outdoor pergola offers great views of the Red River Ski & Summer Area. Cabins run from \$89 to \$200 a night, while the house includes 12 beds for groups.

"We want to help Red River transition to a multiseasonal destination," he says.

PIONEER LODGE

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