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REI AWARDS COMMONWEAL CONSERVANCY A \$15,000 GRANT FOR TRAIL BUILDING AT THE GALISTEO BASIN PRESERVE

*Over five miles of new trails will be developed this fall
in the open spaces of the Galisteo Basin Preserve*

Santa Fe, NM, July 10, 2014—In its third year of grant making to Commonweal Conservancy, REI recently announced a major gift of \$15,000 to support the development of more than 5 miles of publicly accessible trails at the Galisteo Basin Preserve. The Preserve's existing trail network includes more than 22 miles of hiking, cycling and equestrian trails. Over the past eight years, the trails of the Preserve have grown in popularity to become one of the region's most beloved recreational resources. According to recent surveys, more than 15,000 hikers, mountain-bikers and equestrians enjoy the Preserve trails each year.

Since the first phase of trail development in 2006, Commonweal has built and maintained the trail system with help of volunteers, the *Friends of the Preserve*, along with assistance from the Santa Fe Conservation Trust, the Trails Alliance and the Santa Fe Fat Tire Society. After a brief hiatus, the Preserve trail network was significantly expanded with support from REI. Over the past two years, REI has contributed \$10,000 to Commonweal to facilitate the construction of six miles of trails within the 13,000-acre Preserve. An additional 25 miles of trails are planned for construction during the next five years.

In 2014, five miles of trails will be improved and built to link the Cottonwood Trailhead to some of the Preserve's most popular hiking, mountain biking and equestrian trails within the property's "central basin." The new trails will provide access to an area of the Preserve that, until this year, has not been available to the public.

In addition to new trails, REI's \$15,000 grant will allow Commonweal to expand the Cottonwood Trailhead's parking area, create new signage at the Preserve's three trailheads, address drainage issues on the existing trail network, and fund orienteering signage at key trail intersections.

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"REI's gift is an act of extraordinary faith and trust in Commonweal's land conservation and recreational mission," said Ted Harrison, president of Commonweal Conservancy. "We are deeply grateful for REI's commitment and support of the Galisteo Basin Preserve. It is an investment that will pay dividends to our community for generations to come."

"REI's grant program seeks to grow and enhance diverse, accessible, and popular outdoor places where our members recreate," said Bob Mosher, Outdoor Programs & Outreach Coordinator for REI in New Mexico. "Commonweal Conservancy is doing wonderful work to increase recreational opportunities for residents and visitors to Santa Fe. We're excited to help them get closer to their goal of a completed trail network at the Galisteo Basin Preserve."

On Saturday, September 27, 2014, REI and Commonweal Conservancy will co-sponsor a volunteer trail building workshop at the Preserve to correspond with National Public Lands Day. Volunteers will receive a free t-shirt and will be registered in a drawing for other give-aways. The event on September 27th will be one of three volunteer trail-building workshops that Commonweal will sponsor in September and October 2014. Dates and time of those trail building events will be released later in the summer.

About the Galisteo Basin Preserve

The Galisteo Basin Preserve is a land-conservation and community-development initiative in central Santa Fe County that is spearheaded by Commonweal Conservancy. Through a carefully orchestrated program of conservation easements and limited development, the Galisteo Basin Preserve is designed to permanently protect more than 13,000 acres of open space, migratory wildlife habitat, native vegetation, and cultural resources in the Galisteo Basin. Publicly accessible trails, land-restoration projects, and green home construction in five conservation neighborhoods currently animate the Preserve. For more information about the Preserve and its publicly-accessible trail network, visit www.galisteobasinpreserve.com.

About REI

REI is a \$2 billion national multichannel retail co-op headquartered outside of Seattle. With more than 5 million active members, REI serves the needs of outdoor adventurers through innovative, quality products; inspiring classes and trips; and integrated customer service that allows shoppers to buy great gear and clothing in any way they want. REI has 135 stores in 33 states, including stores in Santa Fe and Albuquerque, NM, and REI.com and REI.com/outlet. Anyone may shop with REI, while members pay a one-time \$20 fee to receive a share in the company's profits through an annual member refund based on patronage. Membership in the co-op also includes special promotions and discounts on REI Adventures trips and REI Outdoor School classes.

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About Commonweal Conservancy

Commonweal Conservancy is a nonprofit, conservation-based, community-development organization dedicated to forging deep and sustaining relationships among people, land, and the built environment. Commonweal acquires properties of cultural and ecological significance and engages in collaborative land planning that inspires the creation of whole communities. Since its founding in 2003, Commonweal has contributed more than \$4.5 million in land value donations to the Santa Fe Conservation Trust and Santa Fe County. The organization also has secured gifts of land and conservation easements valued at nearly \$5 million from other Galisteo Basin property owners.

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