

Taos Land Trust plans dinner to raise funds

By Matthew van Buren

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The Taos Land Trust will host a gourmet fundraising dinner featuring local fare at Doc Martin's on Thursday (Oct. 14).

The Land Trust seeks to preserve Northern New Mexico's landscape by working with local landowners to create conservation easements.

Executive Director Ernie Atencio said the Land Trust is planning a "phenomenal feast" of local produce and grass-fed beef from the Wolf Springs Ranch paired with good wines. The beef was processed by the Taos County Economic Development Corp.'s Mobile Matanza.

"It's all going to be locally produced," Atencio said.

The planned menu includes produce from Red Willow Farms, curried winter squash soup, New York Strip steaks and a Velarde apple crumble with homemade pear ice cream.

Atencio said the Taos Land Trust is working on several projects, having recently received some "very exciting inquiries."

"They're coming fast and furious, which is great," he said. "It's very exciting."

Atencio said grants the non-profit acquires help with specific projects but are often unable to be used to run the organization. For example, of a \$218,000 grant to preserve nearly 15 acres along the Río Hondo, no money could go toward the Land Trust's operational costs.

Eighty tickets are available for the Oct. 14 dinner for \$100 apiece, with half the proceeds to go toward the Taos Land Trust's operational expenses.

"We still have to cover our costs," Atencio said.

Gabriel Martínez helped his mother create the recent Río Hondo conservation easement. He said the solution was ideal, as the land cannot be further developed, and his mother's grandchildren won't be able to build on it or fight over it.

"This is perfect," he said. "This is a good thing they're

doing."

Martínez said the Taos Land Trust made the process easy.

"It's a snap ... Those guys are just wonderful," he said. "They do all the work, really."

To RSVP for the dinner, call (575) 751-3138. For more information about the Taos Land Trust, visit www.taoslandtrust.org.

