



Santa Fe
WATERSHED
ASSOCIATION

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A 'COMMUNITREE' EFFORT

Planting trees in the arid landscapes of the Santa Fe Watershed may seem counterintuitive, but trees, shrubs, and other native plants are some of the best tools available to prepare for and mitigate the effects of an increasingly hotter and drier local climate. Santa Feans are already well aware of climate change and the importance of native species. Enthusiasm for ecologically-appropriate plantings and land stewardship has never been higher.

The Santa Fe Watershed Association (SFWA) is therefore thrilled to announce its newest initiative, "[Santa Fe CommuniTree Network](#)," in partnership with TreeSmart Santa Fe, the Santa Fe Community Foundation, and Seeds of Wisdom, LLC. The goal is to support and facilitate efforts to sustain and expand ecologically-appropriate vegetative cover and urban tree canopy throughout the Santa Fe River watershed, with an emphasis on equity, water conservation, and multidisciplinary collaboration.

"It's called 'Santa Fe CommuniTree Network' to underscore the importance of partnership; a network of local groups and individuals who care about our land; an adaptive community centered around trees and other plants," explains Mori Hensley, Director of Excessive Wordplay for SFWA (her unofficial title). "I suppose we are also trying to expand access for all Santa Feans to be able to commune with trees."

Many existing metro-Santa Fe trees are sick or dying, so a certain number of trees need to be planted annually just to keep the urban forest from shrinking significantly. As Santa Fe's climate changes, trees, shrubs, grasses, and forbs will be increasingly crucial for protecting soil, storing water, sequestering carbon, providing food and habitat for wildlife, breaking down air and water pollutants, and providing greenspace and other physical and mental health benefits to humans.

"We're especially excited to utilize rain gardens in as many planting projects as possible," notes SFWA Executive Director Andy Otto. "In essence rain gardens allow us to take stormwater that is currently wasted and use it to make our community healthier and more hydrated." The SFWA is working on several planting projects this spring, and is planning more projects for the coming months and years on public and private land.

The opportuni-trees are as boundless as possible pun combinations.

Santa Fe CommuniTree Network will officially launch with a series of virtual "tree-vents" during Earth Week, concluding with a talk by NM State Forester Laura McCarthy and a tree-giveaway raffle on Thursday, April 29, at 5:30pm. For more details and to purchase raffle tickets visit www.santafewatershed.org/communitree or email mori @ santafewatershed . org.

Our River, Our Water, Our Future