

Mountain Monthly

Your Guide to Cloudcroft and the Sacramento Mountains | SEPTEMBER 2026



Cyclists pack Burro on race day. Photo by Drew Gaines

The Race That Refused to Die

Two friends brought back a 1990s mountain bike race.

This fall it marks 15 years and a large field for the

High Altitude Classic cross-country mountain bike race

BY HANNAH DEAN

Nine out of every ten riders who show up for the High Altitude Classic don't live anywhere near Cloudcroft, according to organizer **Mark Castelo**, a New Mexican who chats with me on the phone from Canada, where he and his wife split time with Albuquerque.

Most racers drive at least two hours to get here, many from El Paso, Las Cruces, and across the border from Chihuahua, for the privilege of grinding up a mountain on singletrack that some would call punishing.

Last September, 175 of them raced, another dozen or so sat on a waitlist, and the whole event sold out a week early for the first time in its decades-long history.

For a village that has built its identity around outdoor recreation — hiking, disc golf, winter sports — it's a weekend when that identity pays off in a very literal way: hundreds of visitors filling up restaurants, the brewery, and lodging, drawn by the forest trails. And a striking number of challengers come back year after year.

This September marks fifteen years since two friends decided, more or less on a whim, to bring a dead mountain bike race back to life.

How It Started

Castelo says he didn't start the race. It began in the 1990s, when Cloudcroft locals Matt Willett and **Matt Preslar**,

founders of High Altitude bike shop, which recently celebrated its 30th anniversary under Willett's helm, put together one of New Mexico's first mountain bike races. Mountain biking itself was still catching on back then.

The race built a following and has been going off and on since then.

Castelo's path to Cloudcroft ran through his childhood in Las Cruces, where the village only an hour-and-a-half away was a favorite escape from the desert heat. He picked up bike racing almost by accident. A friend talked him into a triathlon around 2006, and while Castelo says he "was a terrible swimmer and an average runner," he discovered he could really ride a bike.

He started racing mountain bikes the following year, and it wasn't long before he started asking around about whatever happened to that old Cloudcroft race he remembered from family trips. That question led him to Willett.

In 2011, the two decided to bring the race back themselves. That first year, they'd have been thrilled to see 100 riders show up. They got closer to 75.

Fifteen years later, the race they revived as a passion project has become one of the largest cross-country mountain bike events in the region, and one of the few still growing while similar races have quietly folded.

Varied Course with Views (and Teeth)

Ask Castelo why riders keep coming back, and the course is high on his list.

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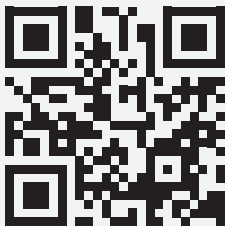
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It has a reputation as one of the toughest cross-country courses in the region: rocky, root-strewn, and demanding, even by the standards of a sport built on suffering. But it's also designed to be a spectacle: rather than sending riders far out into the wilderness and back, the course loops through trail networks near town, so racers are rarely more than a mile or two from Cloudcroft as the crow flies, even though it feels remote.

The course hasn't stayed the same over 15 years, and not entirely by choice. Longtime racers still talk about the old Bailey Canyon descent, the signature "never-ending downhill" from the race's earliest days, now closed to protect habitat for the Sacramento Mountains Checkerspot butterfly, which is listed in the Federal Register under Endangered Species Act consideration. Organizers reworked the route two years ago in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service, while keeping the difficulty riders expect.

The finish line has moved too. Last year marked the first time the race ended at Elevation Park and the Cloudcroft Disc Golf Course, a change organizers plan to keep. Depending on their category, riders complete multiple laps, passing back through the reveling crowd of friends and family — plus the timing officials — each go.

One other shift for this year's race: it's running independently, no longer tied to the informal New Mexico Off-Road Racing Series or requiring a USA Cycling license. Castelo said the decision came down to cost: insurance and permitting fees have climbed sharply, and a survey of racers found that only about 10 to 12 percent were actually racing to collect series points anyway. Cutting the tie keeps registration more affordable.



Castelo says grassroots cross-country racing has been shrinking nationwide, and New Mexico is no exception. The state once had a full circuit of races stretching from Taos to Silver City; today, most of those events no longer exist.

The High Altitude Classic bucked that trend. Organizers capped this year's field at 175 riders, and last September's race sold out a full week ahead of time, the earliest sellout since the 2011 revival, with a waitlist to boot. A record 188 riders signed up.

On average, 85 to 90 percent of racers travel at least two hours to get here. Last year, roughly 65 to 75 percent of the field came from El Paso and Chihuahua, Mexico, with local riders making up close to 10 percent. The rest arrive from across New Mexico, West



Texas — Midland and Odessa send a steady contingent — and Arizona cities like Flagstaff, Tucson and Phoenix.

Factor in the friends and family who tag along, and organizers estimate the race brings something like 300 visitors to town even in a modest year.

Castelo says race profits go straight back into the community, and increasingly, that means hyper-locally.

In its early years, proceeds went to national organizations like the American Cancer Society. Over time, as organizers surveyed racers about where they wanted their entry fees to go, the giving got more local: New Mexico-based nonprofits like Roadrunner Food Bank, and eventually direct support for Cloudcroft's own youth cross-country running team through uniforms, shoes, and equipment.

"We joke about that all the time too," Castelo says of the running local gag that the same five-dollar bill just keeps trading hands around town. He points out that the race also pulls fresh money in from the hundreds of out-of-town riders, their friends, and families who spend a weekend eating, drinking, and sleeping in Cloudcroft.

‘An Army’ of Volunteers

Nobody makes a living off the High Altitude Classic, Castelo says. Castelo, Willett, and co-organizers **Amy Coor** and **Dave Halliburton** — who handles registration and race-day logistics from Las Cruces — all do this on top of their day jobs, purely because they love it. Planning for next year's race starts the day after this year's, often over coffee at Willett's house while the lessons are still fresh.

From there, it's a long runway: locking in dates and land-use permits with the Forest Service up to a year and a half out, securing insurance and permits six to eight months ahead, then ramping into sponsorships, promotion and volunteer recruitment as race day approaches. On race weekend itself, 30

(Top) Staying loose for the start.
(Bottom) Classic organizers (L-R) Halliburton, Coor, Willett, and Castelo

local volunteers are stationed along the course to guide riders and be ready in case anyone gets hurt. Last year, more than 40 turned out.

What to expect: **Cindy and Ricky Preslar** guiding riders to the next turn, the Cloudcroft Schools' cross-country team fueling racers with burritos, K-Cloud's **Kris Parks** calling the race and DJing the after-party and awards, the High Altitude shop crew wrenching on bikes, Castelo's own parents helping coordinate trophies, prizes, and shirts behind the scenes. Local businesses have stepped up as sponsors, alongside lodger's tax funding and longtime supporters. "We're like little ants," Castelo says, "just scrambling and doing our thing" so that when the racers and spectators show up, "it's fun and it just looks easy."

Castelo doesn't claim to have a formula, but after 15 years he has a theory: Cloudcroft itself is the draw.

It's a town that welcomes visitors rather than merely tolerating them, with a brewery, restaurants and a walkable Burro Avenue main drag that turns a bike race into a small getaway.

The course offers a genuine physical challenge. And the organizing team — volunteer as it is — has gotten good at the unglamorous work of clear communication, a functional website, and a race-day clean enough to look effortless.

"When things look easy," Castelo says, "that means we've run an operationally tight race."

This year's High Altitude Classic returns to Cloudcroft this fall on the same course as last year, finishing once again at Elevation Park. Registration details:

<https://www.chubbytire.com/events/highaltitudeclassic>



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The Cloudcroft Ultra trail race brought competitors of all ages to the village

Dear Readers,

Our cover story celebrates the **High Altitude Classic**, that longtime favorite cross-country mountain bike race that draws locals and visitors up onto our trails every year. It’s a good reminder of what makes Cloudcroft so special: a giant forest and playground right in our backyard.

In Mountain News, we report on the new U.S. Forest Service Stewardship Agreement and what it means for the future of Lincoln National Forest, the land management partnerships shaping how our forest is cared for in the years ahead. Plus: wildfire mitigation from the Village and Otero County Electric Cooperative reporting in the future.

With school back in session, don’t miss **Paula Finch’s Peak Performance** column, and be sure to bookmark the school’s parent resource page at: cms-bears.org/parents.

Extra, Off the Press

September is shaping up to be a full month on the mountain.

Lumberjack Day comes to Ski Cloudcroft, the Chamber of Commerce car show and food truck battle takes over Zenith Park, and a pickleball tournament rounds out the courts calendar.

Last month, the **Cloudcroft Ultra Race** brought runners from all over to test themselves against our elevation,

and catch both forest and basin views from the Rim Trail.

Our forest and parks are special. Year-round, Zenith Park deserves a love letter.

The reliable walking path, travelers picnicking, the sound of children laughing and playing...it’s all teeming with life. My daughter learned to ride a bike there, climbed her first tall tree, acted in a play, and performed countless other feats of bravery.

It’s beautiful in every season and every hour: crisp mornings with sun pouring through glittering aspen leaves, snowy treks where ours are the first footprints, frisbees flying at the Byron Ligon par-3 course, sweaty pickleball rounds, and elk gathering at dusk, bulls bugling after potential mates. It’s become the rhythm of our lives here.

The park keeps evolving, too. The disc

golf course was recently reworked, the pickleball courts are freshly resurfaced, and the ice rink has a new lessee settling into a long-term lease, with improvements already underway. We’ll have more on that soon.

Because we love our parks, the Monthly is proud to sponsor an upcoming fundraiser for the Cloudcroft Parks and Recreation fund – a bucket golf tournament coming up in October. Reach out to Bri at High Altitude to find out how you can support this event.

We’re also glad to keep growing the Monthly team, and we’re proud to feature editorial photography from **Bobby Moberly**.

A lifelong resident of the Sacramento Mountains, Bobby is a wildlife and landscape photographer who’s just as likely to be found backpacking for a week straight as trail running in pursuit of a shot no one else has caught. He splits his time between New Mexico and Colorado, always chasing the next wild place, and his work has appeared in Epic Outdoors magazine and on the cover of Backcountry Journal. Some of his prints are carried locally at the Highland Store, and he shows throughout the year with the help of his wife, Tammy. See more at bobbymoberlyphotography.com.

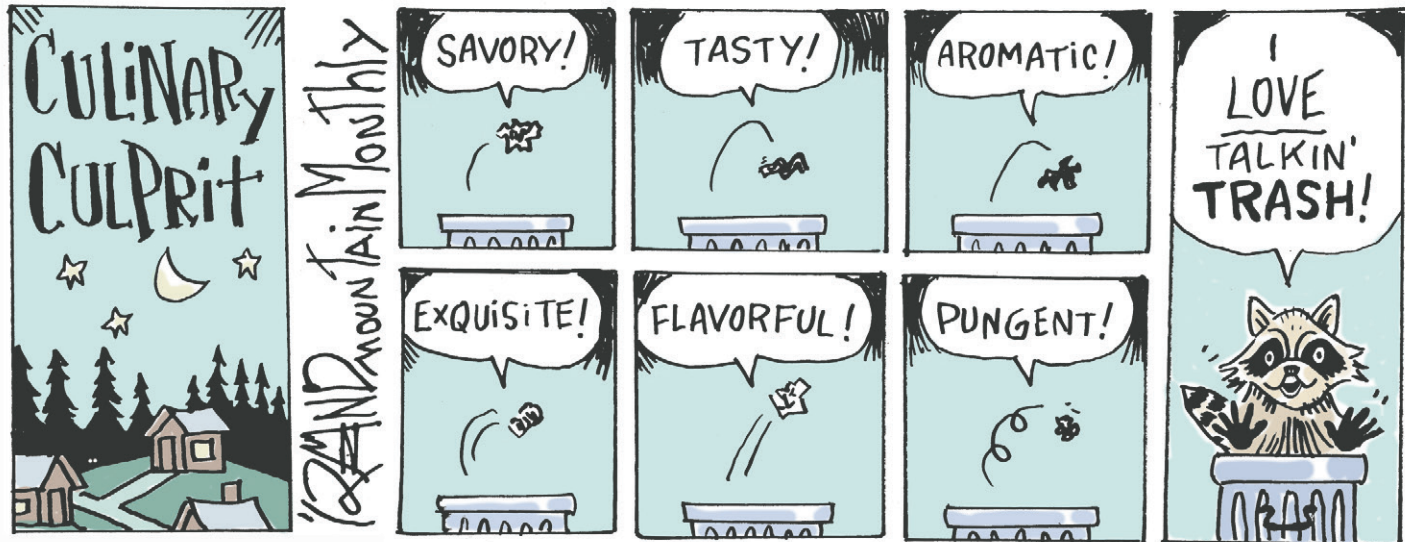
Got a shot of your own mountain moment? Send it our way: hello@mountainmonthly.com.

—Hannah Dean



Photographer and Monthly contributor, Bobby Moberly

Switchbacks by Rand Carlson



Editor: Hannah Dean

Contributing Editor: Drew Gaines, Jonny Coker

Contributors: Rand Carlson, Lyn Canham, Hilary Kitzman Damon Marez, Christina Olvera, Paula Finch, Lynn Melton

Community Voices: Sandra Barr, Katie Grabowski, Greg Crinklaw, Paul Benshoof, Paula Finch, Jorden Scott, Katie Jones, Dylan Smith

Editorial Photography: Bre Kincaid, Sam Seth, Crystal Tompkins, Dwight Raulerson, Bobby Moberly

Cloud Puzzle Constructor: Wells Vaiana

Social Media: Ray Media

Distribution: Miles o’ Paper Distribution Co, Stevie Dean, Rian Whisenhunt

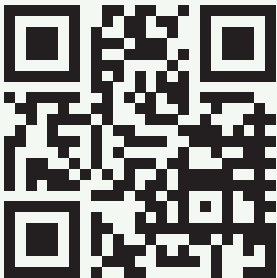
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VILLAGE OF CLOUDCROFT NEW MEXICO

YOUR SEPTEMBER PLANS

★ LUMBERJACK DAY AT SKI CLOUDCROFT

Date: Saturday, September 19
Location: Ski Cloudcroft,
1920 U.S. Hwy, 82,
Cloudcroft, NM 88317
Time: Competitor registration 8 a.m.;
competition begins 9 a.m.
Admission: Free to watch
Competitor Fee: \$10 per event
Details: Food, craft vendors, family
fun, and a kids halftime show.
More: cloudcroftlumberjackday.com

★ HIGH ALTITUDE CLASSIC XC MOUNTAIN BIKE RACE

Date: Sunday, September 20
Start: 10 a.m. at High Altitude Shop
(Downtown Cloudcroft)
Awards: 2 p.m. at Elevation Park /
Cloudcroft Disc Golf Course
(top of Mescalero Ave.)
Details: 10-, 13.5-, and 17-mile
races. Register on BikeReg.

★ PICKLEBALL TOURNAMENT AND FUNDRAISER

Dates: Saturday–Sunday,
September 5–6
Location: Zenith Park public courts
Details: Cloudcroft Mountain Smash
Pickleball Tournament;
fundraiser for Cloudcroft
Track & Field
Fees: \$25 registration
+ \$30 per bracket
Register: PickleballDen.com

★ CLOUDCROFT ART SOCIETY LABOR DAY SHOW

Dates: Friday–Sunday,
September 4–6
Location: Old Red Brick Schoolhouse
Hours: Friday noon–5 p.m.;
Saturday 10 a.m.–5 p.m.;
Sunday 10 a.m.–3 p.m.

★ BATTLE OF THE FOOD TRUCKS & CRAFT SHOW

Dates: Saturday–Sunday,
September 5–6
Location: Zenith Park
Hours: Saturday 10 a.m.–5 p.m.;
Sunday 10 a.m.–4 p.m.
Details: Food trucks, craft vendors,
and People's Choice
Admission: Free

★ HERITAGE DAY CAR SHOW

Date: Sunday, September 6
Location: Zenith Park
Hours: 10 a.m.–5 p.m.
Admission: Free
Entry Fee: \$10 for show vehicles
Details: Best in Show, 2nd,
and 3rd place awards.
Info: 575-682-2733

★ CLOUDCROFT LIGHT OPERA COMPANY (CLOC) MELODRAMA

*The Inventor's Daughter, or...
The Villain Made a Grab
for the Lab*

Dates: September 4, 5, 6,
18, and 19
Time: 7:30 p.m.
Location: CLOC Pavilion,
Zenith Park
Admission: Free

★ 87TH ANNUAL OTERO COUNTY FAIR AND RODEO

Dates: September 24–27
Location: 401 Fairgrounds Road,
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Details: Fair and rodeo.
More: oteroountyfair.com

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Details: Locally grown and baked
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and candies, and
local honey. Cash only.
Times: Friday 5 p.m. - Sunday 9 a.m.
Location: Cloudcroft Ice Rink,
Zenith Park

★ FIRE PREVENTION DAY

Date: Saturday, September 26
Time: 11 a.m.–4 p.m.
Details: Starts with a fire truck
parade down Burro,
followed by activities,
demos, bounce houses,
and more at the pavilion.
Free to the public.



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Water Operator David Hunter gives Leadership Cloudcroft an inside look at the village’s wells and springs at the water plant.

Water Decades in the Making: Inside Cloudcroft’s Wells and Springs

This field report dives into current wells, springs, and water collection system for Cloudcroft

BY HANNAH DEAN

Village Water Operator David Hunter walked this year’s **Leadership Cloudcroft** cohort through the water systems near Ski Cloudcroft on July 17. What they learned: the water coming out of your faucet right now has likely been working its way down through the mountain for 15 to 25 years, according to isotope dating from the New Mexico Bureau of Geology and Mineral Resources.

Testing using chemical and oxygen-isotope analysis confirmed that snowmelt, rather than rainfall, is the primary source of reservoir refill in the area.

Some of that same snowmelt, moving on eastward toward the Roswell Artesian Basin, won’t resurface for roughly 1,300 years, according to that same NM Bureau of Geology study.

Hunter, a Level IV-certified operator five months into the job, led the cohort, plus a handful of retired engineers, geophysicists, local leaders, and village officials who tagged along, through the wells, springs, tanks, and pump stations that keep Cloudcroft running.

Public Works hosted; **Ski Cloudcroft** donated lunch. Incoming weather cut the day short, and the group wrapped up the conversation over lunch instead of finishing a planned stop at the Hilltop Tank.

Here’s what stood out, starting with the system’s most pressing weak point.

Little Room for Leaks

Hunter’s biggest worry isn’t a shortage of water underground; it’s a shortage of places to put it above ground once it’s pumped.

Under normal operation, the village’s single raw water tank drops to around 8 feet after the system’s other tanks fill

for the day. That’s routine.

But earlier this year, a major leak forced the wells to run nearly around the clock for about six weeks, and during that stretch, the raw water tank came dangerously close to draining completely, a very different, much more serious low point.

If system pressure drops below 20 psi, the New Mexico Environment Department’s Drinking Water Bureau considers the system vulnerable to contamination seeping through cracks and joints and would issue a boil advisory.

Public Works proposed a fix as part of the village’s recent infrastructure capital improvement plan request: a second tank, matched to the existing 500,000-gallon raw water tank and tied in so that both fill and draw down

together, roughly doubling storage. Based on estimates from Public Works Supervisor **JJ Carrizal**, Mayor **Dusty Wiley**, and Trustee **Keith Hamilton**, the project’s price tag was between \$1.5 to \$2 million.

Water (Time) Tables

The mountain is composed of a fractured carbonate reservoir consisting of dolomite and limestone. This is a critical distinction because such reservoirs exhibit “chaotic” behavior compared to a standard sand-based aquifer.

Snowmelt has historically been the dominant recharge source, according to the Southern Sacramento Mountains Hydrogeology Study, a multi-year investigation by the New Mexico Bureau of Geology and Mineral Resources (data collected 2005–2009).

HOW'S THE MARKET?



JULY 2026

CLOUDCROFT MOUNTAIN AREA		RUIDOSO MOUNTAIN AREA		ALAMOGORDO & BASIN AREA	
Homes Sold	14	Homes Sold	28	Homes Sold	52
Median Sales Price	\$289,500	Median Sales Price	\$350,000	Median Sales Price	\$244,500
Average Days On Market	91 Days	Average Days On Market	115 Days	Average Days On Market	64 Days
All Active Listings	328	All Active Listings	920	All Active Listings	262
Current Price Ranges		Current Price Ranges		Current Price Ranges	
Residential: \$59,000 - \$3,995,000		Residential: \$55,000 - \$5,500,000		Residential: \$69,500 - \$749,500	
Land: \$4,000 - \$1,970,000		Land: \$9,500 - \$1,666,666		Land: \$22,500 - \$5,000,000	
Commercial: \$320,000 - \$2,900,000		Commercial: \$250,000 - \$3,650,000		Commercial: \$90,000 - \$950,000	

Data sourced from the Otero & Lincoln County Associations of Realtors MLS and provided by Future Real Estate

Extreme monsoon events, more than about 7 inches of rain in a few days, matter too.

“A lot of people that I’ve met and talked to think that if I take a cup of water and pour it out on the ground, in about a week it’s going to be back in the aquifer,” Hunter said. “It takes years.”

Cloudcroft’s altitude is part of what makes this matter.

The Bureau’s study found that roughly 75% of all recharge to the regional aquifer system happens above 7,800 feet in elevation, and Cloudcroft itself sits at 8,575 feet, according to a 1960 U.S. Geological Survey report on the area’s groundwater. The village isn’t just managing its own water supply; it’s sitting inside the primary recharge zone for a system that ultimately feeds the Roswell Artesian Basin, dozens of miles to the east.

The mechanics behind Hunter’s “three different tables” theory line up with the geology on record, too. Per the 1960 USGS report, the San Andres limestone that caps the mountain is cavernous and acts as a recharge conduit, feeding water down into the Yeso formation below, a 1,200- to 1,800-foot-thick layer of limestone, gypsum, shale, and siltstone that forms the area’s real aquifer.

Water moving down through the Yeso hits the first impermeable shale or siltstone layer it can’t pass through, then travels sideways along the top of that layer until it finds a way out, through a spring.

Different wells hitting different impermeable layers at different depths would produce exactly the pattern Hunter described: wells at similar elevations with noticeably different depths, suggesting they’re not all drawing from the same water table.

One practical takeaway: Slowing rainwater runoff upstream through gabions, retained tree cover, or other buffers has been shown to help rainfall recharge that does seep into the fractured rock rather than run off.

It won’t replace snowmelt as the primary source, but it’s one lever available now.

More Possible Solutions on the Table

Beyond the second storage tank, several other ideas surfaced during the tour. All in progress, proposed, or under discussion:

A formal aquifer connectivity study in Pump House Canyon: A neighboring resident’s well is known to drop when the village’s wells run, pointing to at least partial connectivity between sources, but the village hasn’t formally studied which wells actually share water. That kind of assessment came up as a potentially cheaper alternative to the other option on the table: drilling a new well on water rights the village already holds off Highway 244, which would require a new pipeline and possibly a pump to push water back uphill.

A new supervisory control and data acquisition system, currently out to bid: The upgrade is expected to add automatic level readings for tanks and ponds. Right now, Hunter measures pond depth by hand with a tape measure, plus new chlorine monitoring equipment and a cybersecurity component.

An ongoing valve exercise program: Public Works has been locating, logging, and testing valves throughout the system. Several have turned out to be non-functional, requiring whole- or partial-town shutdowns to replace them.

A redesigned chlorine injection line: swapping steel-and-brass fittings for PVC to make future repairs easier.

Solar panels redirected to power the pump building: Recently connected to power the pumps, the village hasn’t yet tracked a full month of savings, though it’s estimated to be in the thousands. The project has already eliminated a specific transformer and meter fee, resulting in immediate savings of \$500 per month, regardless of energy production.

In a June 2012 preliminary report on the Sacramento Mountains Watershed, researchers questioned whether **tree thinning** could increase the region’s water resources.

In an October 2015 open-file report for the NM Bureau of Geology, researchers found that tree thinning in the recharge area has been most effective at higher elevations, particularly when larger trees are present, and in areas with north- or northeast-sloping topography.

Research in this area is ongoing because tree thinning is costly.

What it Means for Villagers

Since a major leak was repaired this winter, the system has stabilized: the Woodlands tank now needs refilling

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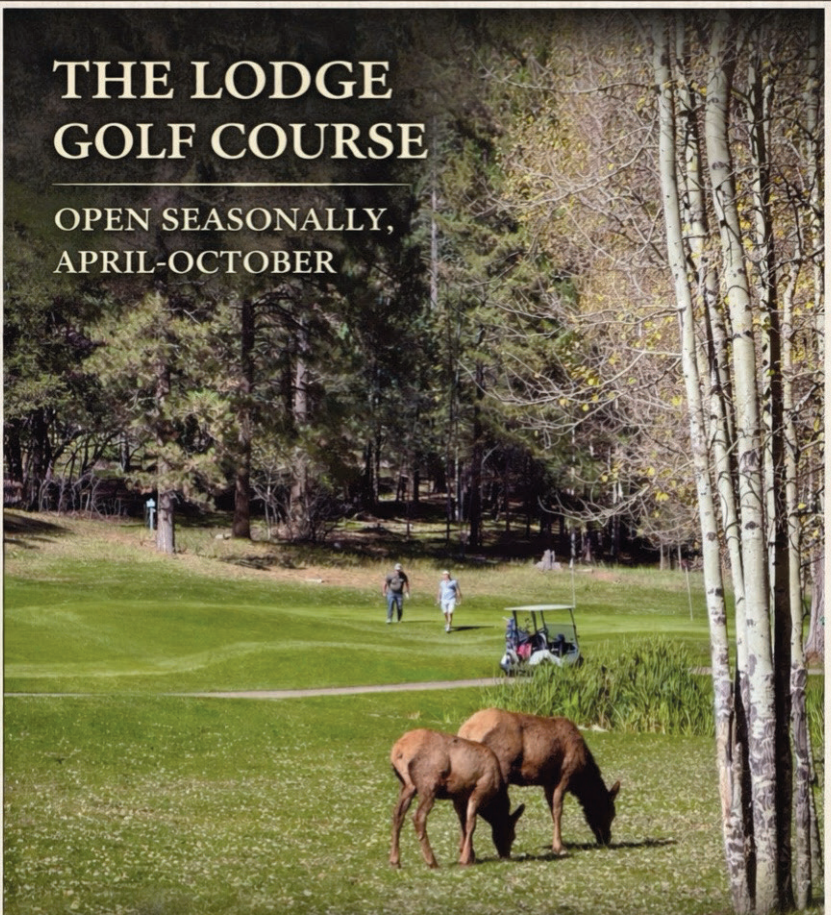
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every three to four days and the Hilltop tank roughly once a day, down from continuous well operation during the leak.

Wells now run an estimated three to four hours a day.

If there were ever a problem, like a failed sample, Hunter said, water under a boil advisory would take at least a day to reach the public, given how long water sits in the system before it's distributed. The water plant, wells, and springs are nearly a mile away from the Hilltop tank.

Groundwater in Cloudcroft only requires chlorination, not the filtration required for surface water. That's not just a regulatory quirk: the 1960 USGS report found the area's groundwater lightly mineralized, a byproduct of the water's short travel time and the limestone it naturally filters through on its way down.

Hunter said the current well and spring supply looks solid, for now.

No Project List (Yet): Lincoln National Forest Weighs In on New 20-Year Stewardship Agreement

According to LNF, project reviews indicate a future focus on fire-fuel reduction work

BY HANNAH DEAN

The U.S. Forest Service and New Mexico signed a 20-year Shared Stewardship Agreement July 22. The deal covers every national forest in the state, but local officials say it's too early to know what it means on the ground in Otero County.

“The agreement expands opportunities for timber production, new wood uses, landscape restoration, and reducing wildfire risk to communities, ecosystems, and local economies across New Mexico,” the USFS press release states.

Jorden Scott, Lincoln National Forest public affairs officer, confirmed the agreement fully applies to the Lincoln but said no project list exists yet.

“The newly signed Shared Stewardship Agreement covers the entire state of New Mexico, overlapping all of the National Forests within it,” Scott said. “This includes the Lincoln National Forest, so the agreement and the opportunities it creates are fully applicable to the Lincoln.”

What Happens Next

The 20-year term mirrors the signing parties' planning horizon, Scott said.

The next step is a regional, not Lincoln-specific, review: a team will screen statewide projects that overlap Forest Service lands, then prioritize those that could land on the Lincoln.

It is expected to focus on fire-fuel reduction — thinning, prescribed burns, timber sales, and mastication — with benefits for watersheds, wildlife habitat, and grazing lands, Scott said.

Official Word

Nothing is finalized, but two ongoing Lincoln efforts could align, Scott said: post-fire recovery near Ruidoso and forest management within the South Sacramento Restoration Project area.

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“As planning progresses, we may see alignment with some of our ongoing high-priority efforts,” Scott said, adding that “there are several potential opportunities on the Lincoln and likely within other national forests across New Mexico.”

Clarity should improve in the project-planning phase, Scott’s office said.

The agreement lets state, county, and tribal partners carry out priority projects on federal land where boundaries overlap — expanding who can do the work, not just how much gets done, the Forest Service says.

Locally, Scott framed the payoff as capacity: strengthening the forest’s ability to deliver critical work benefiting the forest and surrounding rural communities.

The agreement builds on a 2019 shared stewardship pact and advances Executive Order 14225, Immediate Expansion of American Timber Production, which lets the Forest Service authorize states, counties, and federally recognized tribes to carry out certain projects on federal land.

Forest Service Chief Tom Schultz called it a “20-year commitment” to accelerate restoration and reduce wildfire risk across millions of acres statewide.

Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham framed it in more immediate terms: more crews thinning overgrown forest and cutting fuel loads before the next fire season.

For now, the Lincoln’s role is a question of when and where, not if. Updates will follow as regional planning takes shape, Scott’s office said.

Having a Say: The Southern New Mexico RAC

Residents who want a say in which projects move forward have another avenue: the Southern New Mexico Resource Advisory Committee (RAC).

Southern New Mexico’s national forests, including the Lincoln, are recruiting nine to 15 volunteers for the committee, which recommends how Secure Rural Schools Title II federal funds get spent across Grant, Catron, Sierra, Socorro, Lincoln, and Otero counties.

Those funds benefit public lands in the Gila, Lincoln, and Cibola national forests. Members vote on projects covering road, trail, and campground maintenance, rangeland support, wildlife habitat restoration, invasive weed control, and watershed protection.

The Forest Service is prioritizing applicants with local knowledge and seeking a balanced roster representing organized labor, timber, mining, grazing, environmental groups, elected office, and tribal nations.

How to apply: Submit a completed USDA AD-755 interest and background-check form to RAC Coordinator Nathaniel Marquard by mail (Gila National Forest, Attn: Nathaniel Marquard, 3005 E Camino del Bosque, Silver City, NM 88061) or email SM.FS.SouthernNM.RAC@usda.gov.

There is no fixed cutoff; applications are accepted on a rolling basis until the committee is full, so apply early.



From left, Dave and Katie Agnew, and Katie’s daughters Dakota and Lorelei Jones at the entrance to Little J Ranch Farm Sanctuary east of Cloudcroft.

A Second Life for Farm Animals: Little J Ranch

At a rescue ranch east of Cloudcroft, a family, with the help of volunteers, has built the Sacramento Mountains’ only farm animal sanctuary, one rescue at a time.

BY JONNY COKER

When Wilbur the potbelly pig arrived at Little J Ranch, he could only walk about ten feet before he had to stop.

“When we got him, he was severely overweight. His hooves were overgrown,” Katie Agnew said. “He could barely walk. He was very angry, aggressive, bitey, just not happy.”

Wilbur was surrendered to Agnew after his family moved away and left him behind.

Agnew has since put him on a diet and tracked down someone who could trim his hooves back. The pig she describes now is a different animal.

“He’s lost a lot of weight. He walks all over the pasture. He’s happy, he’s friendly,” she said. “You go outside and he runs up to you. That’s what’s so rewarding, seeing them come from such a bad place and getting them to a better place.”

Wilbur is one of more than 150 animals at Little J Ranch, the farm sanctuary Agnew directs in the mountains a few miles east of Cloudcroft.

“We’re somewhere between 150 and 200 [animals] right now,” she said.

Chickens, ducks, quail, peacocks, cows, goats, pigs, sheep, donkeys, rabbits, dogs and cats. They all share the property which Agnew runs with her husband, Dave, and her two daughters, Lorelei and Dakota.

A Viral Start

The ranch’s success started, more or less, with a calf.

“Lola is our oldest Highland cow, and one of the first animals we got. She was pregnant when we got her,” Agnew said. “Hamish [was then born], a little fluffy, adorable little bull calf. That’s when I first started a Facebook page, just to showcase him. And it really blew up. People just loved him. That’s what got us some exposure, and from there we just kept going.”

The family was filling a void. Word spread about the ranch. Animals, and the people carrying them, came from surprising distances.

“We didn’t really have anything in this area when we started. Nothing at all,” Agnew said. “We’ve had people coming from Las Cruces, El Paso, Lubbock, as far as San Antonio.”

The family filed for 501(c)(3) nonprofit status, and now, Little J is a formal rescue. Many animals arrive the way Wilbur did, out of distressing situations. According to Agnew’s youngest daughter Dakota, one of the first animals that the ranch took in as a nonprofit was Daisy the pig.

“She used to be a house pig, until she started eating their baseboards. Then she had to go outside,” Dakota said.

Some animals stay for life. Others are adopted out.

“We’re pretty strict on the criteria,” Agnew said. “We just don’t want to put them back into bad situations.”

Keeping this many animals fed is the part the public rarely sees.

“In the beginning, we sold calves and we sold eggs. We only had maybe 25 animals, so that was sufficient,” Agnew said. “But people would see us on Facebook. Can you take our goat? Can you take our pig? Before you knew it, we had 100 animals.”

The feed bill now runs close to \$16,000 a year. Nonprofit status changed the math.

“We have monthly sponsors who sponsor a specific animal, and we get a lot of grants,” she said. “It’s really made a huge difference.”

The community covers a good deal of the rest. Volunteers clean pens and help feed. Churches and Air Force personnel turn out for the big builds. The Cloudcroft Brewing Company drops off its spent grain for feed.

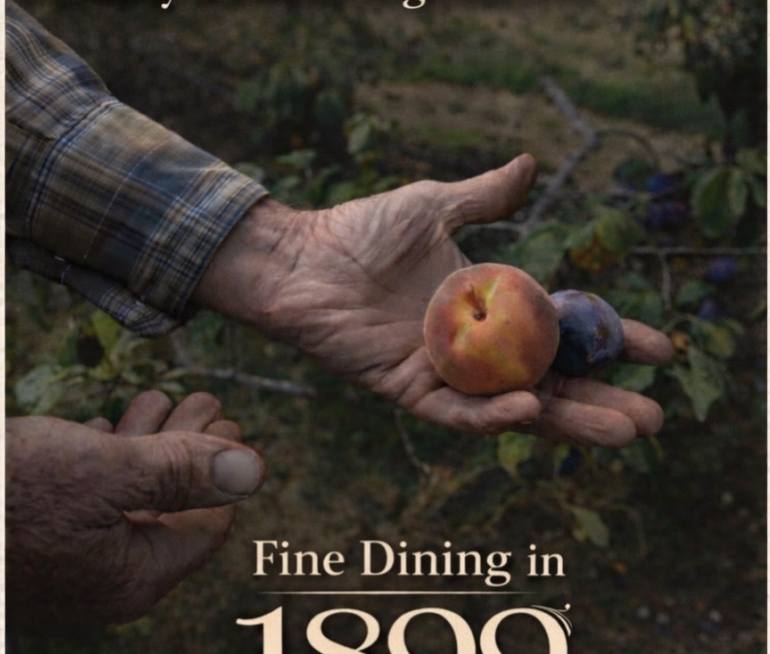
“It saves us from hay big time,” Agnew said. “It makes you know you’re doing the right thing, and that people see that.”

Raised on the Ranch

Her daughters have grown up inside the operation. Lorelei, who sits on the ranch’s board, designs the stickers and shirts, paints the acrylic animal artwork, and crafts the earrings that the sanctuary sells to fund itself.

“I’m pretty partial to the pigs. They’re like little dogs,” Lorelei said. “I bring my ukulele out sometimes and play music to them.”

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The work has shaped how Lorelei sees the animals.

“Growing up with the animals, you just make best friends with them. They feel like family at this point. Each has a personality, and they make friends with each other based on personalities. You can click with certain ones differently. It’s cool.”

For Agnew, the visitors who drive in from across the region are part of the point, the children most of all. They leave, she hopes, learning a lesson.

“They learn why you don’t just take in every chick you see at Tractor Supply, because then they grow up and don’t have a place to go,” she said. “It’s not just a cute bunny or a cute chick or a cute pig. They grow. They require feed, they require care, they require time. It’s something you need to think about before getting the animal, instead of after.”

What Comes Next

What she wants next is room for expansion.

“In five years, we’re hoping to acquire more property so we can take in larger animals,” she said. “There’s a really big need, especially for elderly horses. For people that can’t ride them anymore.”

And the next generation already has plans of its own. Asked what she wants to do when she grows up, Dakota doesn’t hesitate. Her own rescue, she says.

“Not a farm animal rescue. Like a rodent rescue.”

She has grown up watching what saying yes to one animal can become. The pasture behind her held more than 150 of them, including Wilbur the potbelly pig, who now happily trots his way across the meadows.

“If you live in or visit predator country, follow these precautions to reduce your risk:

Avoid outdoor activities such as running or hiking at or around dawn and dusk, when predators are most active.

Supervise children when they are outdoors and keep them close when hiking.

Eliminate hiding places for predators. Remove enough vegetation to detect large predators in your yard and make it difficult for them to hide or approach unseen.

Enclose open spaces below porches and decks.

Install outside lighting (preferably motion sensors). Illuminate walking areas.

Avoid non-native shrubs and plants. These can attract prey that predators may follow.

A leash will help protect your pet and usually is required by law. Pets are easy prey. Bring pets inside at night. If they must stay outside, confine them in a kennel with a secure roof.

Do not feed pets outside. Pet food can attract predators and prey.

Store all garbage securely. Most predators will not cause damage and will move on if abundant food cannot be found.

When a predator detects your presence, it usually will leave the area before you know it’s there. Attacks are rare, and each situation is different and will depend on the predator, the terrain and how the people/person react(s). Though steadfast rules don’t often apply, these suggestions will reduce the risk of attack:

If you see a predator that hasn’t seen you, remain calm and leave the area. Talk loudly as you move away to make your presence known.

Stop and back away slowly while facing the predator if this can be done safely. Avoid direct eye contact. Do not run; this may stimulate the predator’s instinct to chase and attack. Allow the predator as much room as possible for it to leave.

Appear as large as possible. Raise your arms. If wearing a jacket, open it and raise it above your head. If with small children, pick them up to protect them and prevent panic and running.

Never approach a wild animal. Predators are unpredictable but will avoid confrontation unless forced.

Watch for young. Coming between a female and her young is dangerous. If a predator’s young are nearby, move away while remaining alert for other young and adults in the area.

Convince the predator you are not prey. If a predator approaches or behaves aggressively, arm yourself with a large stick, throw rocks or sticks and speak loudly and firmly. Convince the predator that you are dominant and a danger to it.

Fight back if a predator attacks. Fight aggressively and use any weapon available, such as rocks and sticks, a backpack, hat or jacket or your bare hands if necessary.”

New Mexico Department of Wildlife Removes Aggressive Cougar Near Cloudcroft

The cougar approached people aggressively, according to the agency. Eyewitnesses confirm the lion was shot and killed.

BY HANNAH DEAN

A mountain lion seen repeatedly in the vicinity of Osha Trail near Cloudcroft was shot and killed around 2 p.m. Sunday, July 26, as confirmed by eyewitnesses and nearby village residents.

New Mexico Department of Wildlife Communications Director Darren Vaughan later told the Mountain Monthly in response to an email inquiry, “There were two separate incidents in which the cougar approached people in an aggressive manner. In the first incident, warning shots were fired to scare the cougar.”

“During the second incident, the cougar again aggressively approached a Department conservation officer. Department of Wildlife Conservation officers found no wrongdoing in the cougar’s removal,” he said.

Predator Country

Vaughan also added the following wild-life information:

(575) 434-2421

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Local Guide: Village Art Walk

Catch a creative stroll through Cloudcroft. Mosey through the best galleries, shops, and murals.

Originals: The **Cloudcroft Art Society (CAS)** opens their cooperative gallery all month on Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Find them near the step entrance at the Old Red Brick Schoolhouse building, home to the Michael Nivison Public Library.

CAS’s Annual **Labor Day Weekend Art Show** happens September 4–6, open from 1 to 4 p.m. Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, and 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday. More than a dozen local and regional CAS artists will exhibit unique artworks such as original paintings and photography, pottery, pine-needle baskets, gourds, matted art reproductions and cards, digital art, and lithographic prints.

Aspen & Ivy and **The Little Gallery** share a courtyard near the Pine Stump Mall and Dave’s Cafe. Both boast hand-made goods and local artwork. **Justin Alcorn’s** eccentric collages and block prints are framed and gift-ready. Artist/owner **Trey McCurley’s** aptly named Little Gallery is chock full of oil paintings, artisan suncatchers, and more. Find scenes of contemporary Southwestern rural living in nearby Lost Lodge at this gallery, painted by local **Drew Gaines**.

Samantha Odom Art Gallery is next door on Burro — you’ll know it by the bright door. Flanked by one of her original murals in the village show-

casing former Mayor Dave Venable, Odom’s gallery has a wide selection of paintings and prints, many in her signature turquoise and pink palette.

Take a self-guided tour of Odom’s murals (and others’ in the post office, Lodge, and library building) around town. Find them at Future Real Estate, Dave’s, the Burro Street Exchange, and the Turquoise Shop.

Blackbear Coffee Shop hosts a new artist each month on their gallery walls.

Just off Burro, down Mexican Avenue, **Cloudy’s Market** has local artists on display. Find **Cheryl Kaufman’s** paintings of birds, flowers, and landscapes there. Kaufman is a part-time resident of Cloudcroft who earned her undergraduate degree in Fine Arts and Theology and a PhD in Medieval History.

On Burro Avenue, many shops carry original and unique artworks and prints. Find local photographs at **High Altitude**, landscape paintings and more at the **Cloudcroft Souvenir Shop**, handicrafts of all kinds at the **Elk Shed**, and native artwork and sculptures at the **Burro St. Trading Post**.

For wearable art, peruse **The Fat Rabbit**, the **Turquoise Shop**, **Red-wall Jewelry**, and **High Rollin’ Coffee**.

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Bhair Necessities
The Fat Rabbit
The Little Gallery
Aspen and Ivy Boutique
Samantha Odom Art Gallery
Dave's Cafe
Higher Grounds
Instant Karma & Chai Bar
Base Camp 9k
- B**
Western Bar and Cafe
Western Package Store
Hotel Cloudcroft
Kennabelle's Kreations Bakery
Gary Mack Real Estate
The Bear Track
High Altitude
High Altitude Bike Shop
Scotty's Propane
- C**
Elevation Park and Disc Golf Course
- D**
Otero County Electric Cooperative

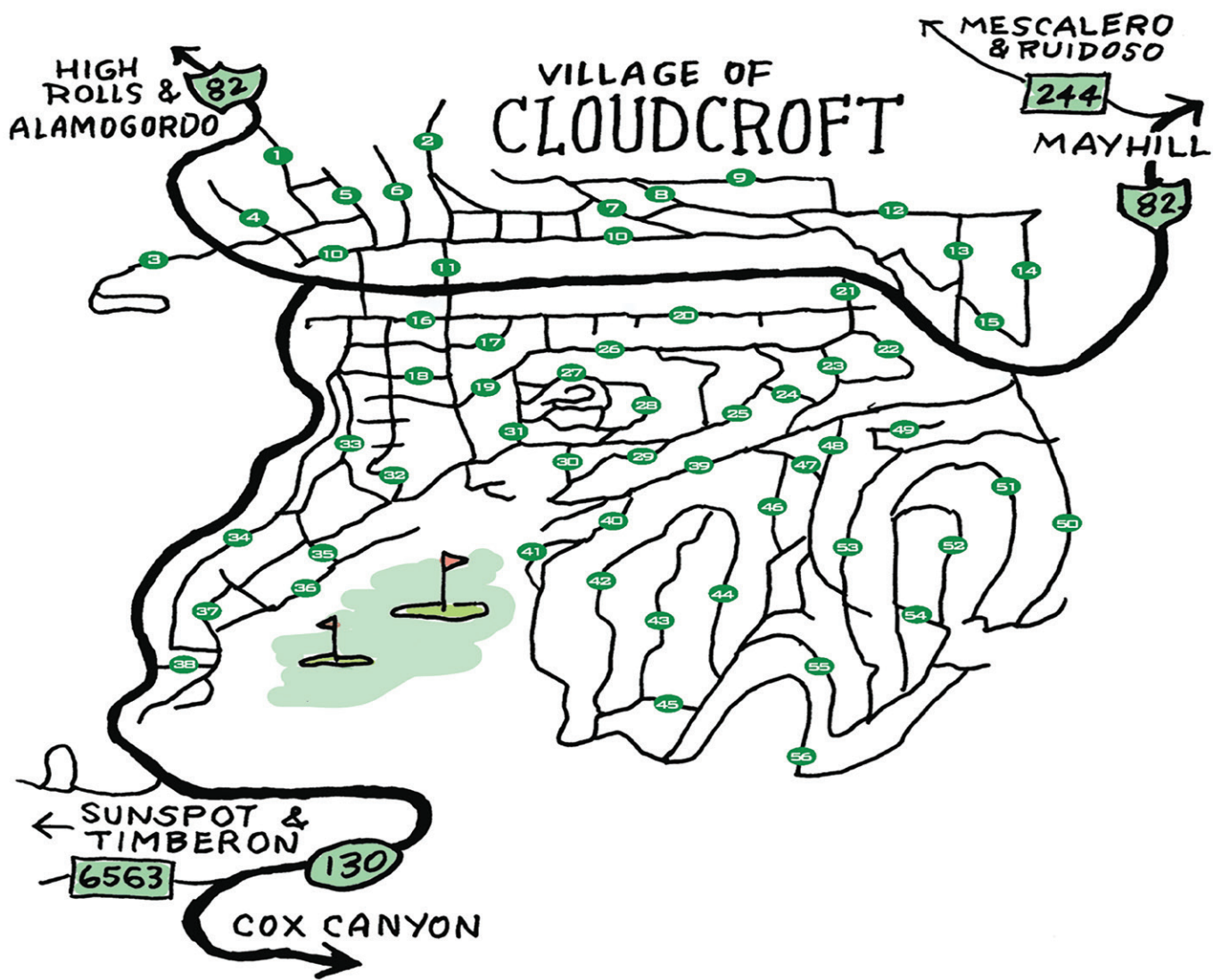
- Cloudcroft Therapeutic Massage
Cloudcroft Archery
Cloudy's
Crystal Tompkins Photography
Coco Blu
Green Mountain Real Estate & Construction, Skywater
Shelley Hughes Architecture PC
Osha Trail Depot
Osha Trail Lodging
Cloudcroft Souvenirs
Laughing Leaf Dispensary
Eight the Cake
Mountain Magic
Poke the Bear
- E**
Burro St. Boarding House
Cloudcroft Brewing Company
The Distillery
Sparks and Rec
- F**
Ski Cloudcroft
- G**
Aspen Trails Realty
Big Daddy's Diner
Tularosa Communications
Cloudcroft Animal Hospital
Dusty Boots Cafe & Taco Cantina and Motel
- H**
The Lodge Resort

- The Lodge Golf Course
1899 and Saint Andrew's Lounge
Seasons Boutique Gift Shop
SugarPines RV Park
- I**
Grand Cloudcroft Hotel
Cloudcroft Chamber of Commerce
Cabins at Cloudcroft
- J**
Zenith Park and Playground
Pickleball and Tennis Courts
Zenith Park Pavilion
Byron Ligon Disc Golf Course
James Sewell Ice Rink
Anglican Church of the Epiphany
Family Dollar
Brother-N-Law BBQ
Magnum's Guns II
Crofting Bed & Breakfast
- K**
Sacred Heart Catholic Church
Village Plaza
Homee
Be in the Mountains Yoga & Massage Therapy
Road Runner Cannabis
High Rollin' Coffee
- L**
Mad Jack's Mountaintop BBQ

- Roots Flower Co.
- M**
New Village Hardware
Pre-School and Extended Care
Cloudcroft United Methodist Church
Summit Inn
The Lodge Pavilion
- N**
Presbyterian Medical Center
Rick Roger's Auto & Equip Repair
Cloudcroft Truck & Auto Parts
Cloud 9000 Coffee
Fernando's Burritos
- O**
United States Post Office
First National Bank
Village Office
- P**
Allsup's
- Q**
Future Real Estate
The Highland
- R**
Deer Park
Cloudcroft Sandwich Shop
- S**
Cloudcroft Schools

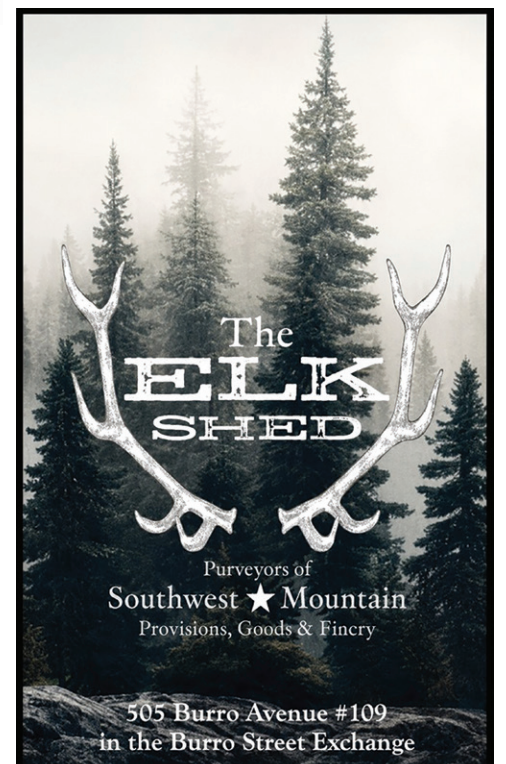
- T**
Burro Street Exchange
The Elk Shed
Atelier Art of Hair by Anna
Red Wall Jewelry
Burro Street Bakery
Tree Top Teez
Noisy Water Winery
Burro Street Trading Post
Tree-Riffic Toys and Candy
Old Barrel Tea Co.
Turquoise Shop
Cloudcroft Church of Christ
- U**
Old Red Brick Schoolhouse
Michael Nivison Public Library
High Valley Weaving School
Cloudcroft Fitness
Cloudcroft Art Society Co-op Gallery
- V**
Sacramento Mountains Historical Museum and Pioneer Village
- W**
Cloudcroft Fire and Rescue Station
Trestle Medical Services

Map not exactly to scale, entirely to character.



STREETS

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1 Muchachita | 29 Beaver |
| 2 Mescalero | 30 5th St |
| 3 Little Mexican | 31 4th St |
| 4 Glorietta | 32 Wren |
| 5 Little Glorietta | 33 Curlew |
| 6 Mexican | 34 Sunset |
| 7 Nyuca | 35 Otter |
| 8 Paqua | 36 Fairway |
| 9 Geronimo | 37 Corona |
| 10 Burro | 38 McDaniel |
| 11 Swallow | 39 Chautauqua Canyon |
| 12 Victoria | 40 Big Bear |
| 13 Skywater | 41 Sugar Bear |
| 14 Rainmaker | 42 Little Bear |
| 15 Rainmaker | 43 Sugar Pine |
| 16 Chipmunk | 44 Sugar Pine |
| 17 Squirrel | 45 Oak Alley |
| 18 Coyote | 46 Maple |
| 19 Fox | 47 Beaver |
| 20 Grand | 48 Columbine |
| 21 Lynx | 49 Balsam Circle |
| 22 Aspen | 50 Woodlands Way |
| 23 Lynx | 51 Shells |
| 24 Ponderosa | 52 Julies |
| 25 Panther | 53 Balsam |
| 26 Coyote | 54 Susans |
| 27 Lynx Loop | 55 Woodlands Way |
| 28 Fox | 56 Blanca Vista |



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1705 James Canyon Hwy, 575-682-1224, bigdaddysdinernm.com Comfort food and desserts. Try the fried chicken basket. Open daily 7:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m.

Black Bear Coffee
200 Burro Ave., 575-682-1239, mybbcoffee.com Locally-roasted beans on the west end of Burro. Head upstairs for conversation nooks, enjoy the downstairs gallery wall with rotating exhibition. Wednesday-Saturday 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Sunday 8:00-3:00.

Brother-N-Law BBQ
209 James Canyon Hwy, 215-858-0400 Delicious smoked meats, baked potatoes, sandwiches, and fried okra. Don’t skip the sauce. Open 11:00. a.m.-6:00 p.m. every day but Thursday.

Burro Street Bakery
505 Burro Ave., 575-682-2777 Sit awhile at this centrally-located joint. Pies, danishes, breakfast burritos, coffee, and more. Open 7:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. daily.

Cloud 9000 Coffee
96 James Canyon Hwy Quick breakfast—smoothies and handhelds. Coffee, tea, and lemonade, too. Outdoor seating only. 7:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. Tuesday-Friday, 8:00 a.m.-

4:00 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, closed Mondays.

Cloudcroft Brewing Company
1301 Burro Ave., 575-682-2337, cloudcroftbrewing.com In-house and regional brews, live music, and fantastic atmosphere. Gnosh on wood-fired pizza, soup du jour, salad, chips & guacamole. Closed Tuesdays. Open 11:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m. the rest of the week—til 10:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday.

Cloudcroft Sandwich Shop
505 Burro Ave., 575-551-0065, cloudcroftsandwich.shop Traditional deli in the Burro Street Exchange. Mural photo op in the outdoor patio. Get any sandwich as a salad, then a monster-sized cookie—#balance. Open 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. every day, closed Wednesdays.

Cloudy’s Market:
102 Mexican Ave. Cloudcroft’s neighborhood grocery with dis-

covery goods, locally sourced produce, and the essentials. Open daily from 10 am- 6 pm.

Dave’s Cafe
300 Burro Ave., 575-682-2127 Classic burgers, fries, and more at a casual setting in the heart of Burro. Open 11:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m. Monday-Thursday, and 11:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m. Friday-Sunday.

Dusty Boots Cafe & Taco Cantina
1317 James Canyon Hwy, 575 601-2009 Laid back home cooking—burgers, tacos, salads, and more. For breakfast, try the veggie-loaded Hiker’s Boot omelette and western potatoes. Open 7:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 7:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday, closes at 5:00 Sunday.

Eight the Cake Bakery
506 Burro Ave., 575-682-3088, eightthecakekellc.com Lovely custom cakes. Cupcakes, cinnamon rolls, and local art. Open Thursday-Monday from 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Family Dollar
309 James Canyon Hwy, 505-532-2697, familydollar.com Get the essentials. Discount chain with groceries, toiletries, and home goods. Open 8:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m. daily.

Fernando’s Burritos
96 James Canyon Hwy Best burrito, barbacoa, and burger in the village. Breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Outdoor seating only. Open 7:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m. daily, closed Mondays.

High Rollin’ Coffee
109 James Canyon Hwy Gour-

met freshies galore on a rotating weekly menu. Open Monday and Tuesday 8:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., and Friday-Sunday 8:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Higher Grounds
300 Burro Ave., 575 682-2127 Ice cream and milkshake counter next to Dave’s Cafe. Hours vary.

Instant Karma Chai Bar
302 Burro Ave. Global spice blends, ayurvedic teas, soothing cacao, and more at their countertop. Stay awhile. Open daily from 1:00-5:00 p.m.

KennaBelle’s Kreations Bakery
308 Burro Ave., 575-682-2712 Follow your nose to this pink patisserie. Custom cakes and orders. Gluten-free options. Open 7:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m. Monday-Saturday. Closed Sunday.

Mad Jack’s Mountaintop Barbeque
105 James Canyon Hwy, 575-682-7577 Legendary barbeque in the old mercantile building. Don’t let the line deter you—it’s worth the wait. Open 11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. Thursday-Sunday, or until sold out.

Noisy Water Winery
505 Burro Ave., 575-682-6610 Local wine, cheese, charcuterie, and gifts. Upscale offerings, casual boardwalk venue. Open 10:00 a.m.-6:30 p.m. daily, open until 7:00 on Friday, and until 7:30 on Saturday.

Old Barrel Tea Co.
505 Burro Ave., 575-682-7474 Fresh houseblend teas to order, plus provisions. Open 11:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Monday-Friday. Open 10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. Saturday, 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Sunday.

Saint Andrew’s Lounge and 1899 at the Lodge
601 Corona Pl., 575-682-2566, 223collectionhotels.com/the-lodge Chef Richard Lepree brings global flair and locally-sourced flavors to the plate. Reservations required on the 1899 side, open Wednesday-Saturday from 5:00-8:00 p.m. Saint Andrew’s Lounge open Wednesday-Saturday from 12:00-8:00 p.m.

The Distillery
1303 Burro Ave., 575-682-2337 Craft cocktails with New Mexico and in-house spirits for date night—adults only.

Western Bar and Cafe and Package Store
304 Burro Ave., 575-682-2445, westernbarandcafe.net Dark and cozy dive bar with tasty food for lunch and dinner. Beer on tap, full bar. Play pool while you wait. Closed Wednesdays, open 11:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m. the rest of the week.

For more detailed information on where to eat, go to www.discovercloudcroft.com/complete-guide-where-to-eat-in-cloudcroft-2026.html

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1006 Coyote Ave., 575-682-2396 Retro ca-sitas by the park. cabinsatcloudcroft.com

Crofting Inn
300 Swallow Pl. Comfy B-and-B. Book on Expedia or Hotels.com

Dusty Boots Motel
1315 James Canyon Hwy, 575-682-7736 Themed rooms with a restaurant next door. thedustyboots.com

Grand Cloudcroft Hotel
1207 James Canyon Hwy, 575-601-2202 Relax in the indoor pool and spa. All king-sized beds. grandcloudcroft.com

Osha Trail Lodging
102 Mexican Ave., 575-937-3767 Modern, conveniently-located suites. Book on AirB-nB or oshatraillodging@gmail.com

SugarPines RV Park
601 Columbine Blvd., 575-682-3375 Easy access in the heart of the village. sug-arpinesrvpark.com

Summit Inn
103 Chipmunk Ave., 575-295-3235 Chic interiors, classic mountain exterior. sum-mitinnnm.com

The Lodge
601 Corona Pl., 575-682-2566 Historic beauty. Stay, eat, play. thelodgeresort.com

For more in-depth lodging information and pictures, go to discovercloudcroft.com/complete-guide-to-lodging-in-cloudcroft-new-mexico-2026.html

Shopping

Aspen and Ivy Boutique
206 Burro Ave. Bespoke goods, candles, plants, and local art. Open Thursday-Sunday 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Base Camp 9K
302 Burro Ave. Teeny space with quality shirts, hats, and more. Open Friday and Saturday 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Sunday 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Burro Street Trading Post
505 Burro Ave.,
225 253-2606 Rocks, gems, and original Southwest art and wear. Open 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. daily. burrostreettradingpost.com

Cloudcroft Archery
100 Little Glorieta Ave., 575-439-7918 In-door range and bow services. 11:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. Tuesday-Friday, Saturday 10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.

Cloudcroft Souvenirs
502 Burro Ave. Southwestern tchotchkes and take-home memorabilia. Open Monday-Saturday 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Sunday 1:00-5:00 p.m.

Cloudcroft Truck & Auto Parts
94 James Canyon Hwy, 575-682-6002 Re-quisite auto supplies. Open 7:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Monday-Friday, Saturday 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Closed Sunday.

Coco Blu
94 Little Glorieta Ave., 575-682-3039 La-dies' boutique with head-to-toe stylish selections and name brands. Open 10:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Sunday-Thursday, and until 5:30 p.m. on Friday and 6:00 p.m. on Saturday.

The Elk Shed
505 Burro Ave. Southwestern goods, clothes, gourmet pantry staples, and more. Open 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily. theelk-shed.com

The Fat Rabbit
206 Burro Ave. Silver and turquoise, plus. Open 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Tuesday-Sunday.

The Highland
206 James Canyon Hwy, 575-682-1041 Nambe, gifts, hunting supplies, licenses, and beyond. Open 10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. daily.

High Altitude
310 Burro Ave. 575-682-1229

Your favorite little outdoors store, boutique, and bike shop. 10:00 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Monday-Thurs-day, until 6:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday, until 5:00 p.m. Sunday. highaltitudenm.com

Homee
109 James Canyon Hwy Everything for sale. Home rental services. Hours vary. inhomee.com

Instant Karma
302 Burro Ave., 575-682-2651 Ayurvedic goods, yogi-friendly clothes, books, and yoga. Open 11:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. daily. ge-tinstantkarma.com

King's Treasure
202 Burro Ave. 575-682-5524 Thrift to your heart's delight without breaking the bank. Open 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. every day except Sunday.

Magnum's Guns II
207 James Canyon Hwy 575-682-6677 Guns and ammo on James Canyon High-way. 1:00-4:00 p.m. Monday, Wednesday to Friday from 12:00-5:00 p.m., Saturday 11:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. magnumsguns.com

Mountain Magic
506 Burro Ave. 575-682-2348 Cloudcroft shirts, woodland toys, baby gifts, natural goods, and more. Open 10:00 a.m.-5:00

p.m. daily.

New Village Hardware
61 Curlew Pl. 575-682-2849 Everything you need for your latest project. Open 7:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Monday-Saturday, 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Sunday.

Poke The Bear
510 Burro Ave. 575-682-1341 Find the music playing on Burro boardwalk for fun and unique finds—lamps, upcycled furniture, outdoor goods, t-shirts, and humor gifts. Open 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. daily.

Red Wall Jewelry
505 Burro Ave. 575-682-4414 Delicate and artisanal wares—great for gifts. Open 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. daily.

Roots Flower Co.
62 Curlew Pl. 575-295-1644 High-end flowers and affordable prices. Bouquets of all sizes, event orders. Open 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday.

Seasons Boutique Gift Shop
601 Corona Pl. 575-682-2566 Shop at the historic Lodge.

The Bear Track
308 Burro Ave. Baubles, figurines, wood-land critter decor, and more. Hours vary.

Tree-Riffic Toys and Candy
505 Burro Ave. 575-682-2566 Goodies for all ages. Open M, Th, Fri, Sat 10:30 a.m-5:30 p.m., W 10:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Sun 12:00-5:00 p.m.

Tree Top Teez
505 Burro Ave. 575-430-5154 Custom silk-screen and embroidery shop. Open 7:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Monday-Friday.

Turquoise Shop
507 Burro Ave. 575-682-3327 Fine jewel-ry at every price point. Open 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. each day, closed Sunday. cloud-croftturquoise.com

Art

Cloudcroft Art Society Co-op Gallery
90 Swallow Pl. Artist-run rotating gallery. Open seasonal Saturdays 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. and for holiday sales. ccartsociety@gmail.com

Off the Beaten Path
100 Glorietta Ave. 575-682-7284 Regional handmade art se-lection of all media. Open 10:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Friday and Satur-day, 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Sun-day. offthebeatenpathstuff.com

continued, p. 18





UNDER CONTRACT

\$329,900

CLOUDCROFT

15 Crestview Drive
Tucked among the tall pines in the Waterfall Subdivision near Cloudcroft, this inviting mountain home offers comfortable, single level living.
Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044



\$215,000

MAYHILL

4 Friar Tuck
Located in the desirable Robinhood subdivision of Mayhill, this cozy 3-bedroom 1,320 sq ft sits on a .28 acre lot.
Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044



UNDER CONTRACT

\$579,999

CLOUDCROFT

690 Karr Canyon
Perfectly sized for a vacation retreat, sitting on just over 5 acres, this log home includes 2 bed/2 bath plus a bonus loft. Log cabin styling at its finest!
Debbie Tate - (575) 430-9511



\$674,900

HIGH ROLLS

36 Old Railroad Drive
Pristine 3BR/2BA home with multiple living areas, pellet + wood stoves, remodeled kitchen/baths, landscaped yard, greenhouse, workshop, and barn.
Cori Abel - (816) 896-2674
Emily Kellam - (575) 214-9479



\$689,000

TIMBERON

7 High Meadow Lane
Custom retreat on 6 acres with income potential & unmatched views. Beautifully custom built with the perfect blend of comfort and functionality.
Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044



\$26,000

CLOUDCROFT

27 Ponderosa Pines Trail
This beautiful lot offers the perfect setting for your dream mountain home. This property has the ideal blend of accessibility, usable terrain and stunning natural surroundings.
Megan Corvin - (575) 551-1999



\$499,000

CLOUDCROFT

5 Bear Spring Road
Updated, immaculate 1.16-acre mountain home with 3 lots. Main-floor primary suite, ample parking, and storage/outbuildings. Furniture included with acceptable offer.
Danica Shaw - (575) 302-8854



SOLD!

\$130,000

CLOUDCROFT

6 Sepulveda Boulevard
Come see this charming 2-bed, 2-bath cabin. Enjoy beautiful mountain views from the spacious deck, while watching wildlife and unwinding in the quiet forest that surrounds it.
Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044



(575) 415-4039
FUTUREREALSTATE.COM
Office locations in Alamogordo, Cloudcroft, and Ruidoso



\$195,000

TIMBERON

20 White River Lane
3 Bed/2 Bath Cavco home on 1.5+ quiet acres, providing privacy, mountain views, and relaxed living in the Sacramento Mountains.
Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044



\$1,250,000

CLOUDCROFT

102 Mexican Avenue
Osha Trail Lodging. Unique multi-family investment opportunity. Includes 6 nightly rental units, a retail space, 6 storage units, and a large finished and heated garage.
Megan Corvin - (575) 551-1999



\$309,000

CLOUDCROFT

802 B & C Chautauqua Canyon Blvd.
Investment opportunity in the heart of Cloudcroft featuring two charming 744 sq. ft. A-frame cabins. One is fully remodeled with modern updates, the second offers opportunity for your personal touch.
Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044



\$299,900

CLOUDCROFT

1012 Maple Drive
Updated cabin with new roof, plumbing, flooring, paint, and tankless water heater. Expanded deck and fully furnished with an acceptable offer.
Megan Corvin - (575) 551-1999



SOLD!

\$200,000

HIGH ROLLS

59 Mountain Estates Road
Over 4 acres with a mix of trees and open meadow. Year-round access and a well in place make it ideal for building your mountain home.
Annie Daniels - (575) 442-3444



UNDER CONTRACT

\$265,000

CLOUDCROFT

17 Carrie Camp Road
3-acre retreat in Pierce Canyon! The kitchen opens up to a covered /fenced patio area, offering outdoor living space perfect for entertaining. This 1 bed, 1 bath cabin is the perfect retreat for a mountain getaway!
Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044



\$399,900

CLOUDCROFT

1008 Victoria Avenue
A rare find in the heart of the Village of Cloudcroft! This home is situated on the "sunny side" of the mountain. Enjoy natural light and warmth year round!
Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044



UNDER CONTRACT

\$259,000

MAYHILL

6 Will Scarlet
3 Bedroom, 2 bathroom home nestled on over 1 acre backing the Lincoln National Forest, located in quiet Robin Hood neighborhood. Carport and RV hookups!
Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044



\$90,000

CLOUDCROFT

14 Aspen
At just under 1.5 acres in Cloud Country Estates, this lot is ideal to build your forever home or vacation cabin!

Annie Daniels - (575) 434-3444



\$2,200,000

HIGH ROLLS

163 Karr Canyon Road
Stunning 126 acre property backing the Lincoln National Forest in High Rolls, NM. You get over 20 acre feet of water rights per year!

Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044



\$260,000

CLOUDCROFT

10 Oak Trail
Cozy 1 bedroom, 1 bathroom A-Frame cabin with 2 decks, just 10 minutes south of Cloudcroft in the Silver Cloud area.

Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044



\$285,000

CLOUDCROFT

12 Little John Lane
2 Bedroom, 1 bathroom with lots of updates. Enjoy working on projects in the workshop with electric.

Megan Corvin - (575) 551-1999



\$454,000

HIGH ROLLS

73 Cider Mill Farm Road
Fully fenced and gated 2.5 acres offering privacy, nature, and space for hobbies. Updated home with new flooring and a charming rustic-modern kitchen.

Annie Daniels - (575) 442-3444



\$392,000

HIGH ROLLS

10 Red Mountain Drive
Escape to this 5-bed, 2-bath log-style home on 3/4 of an acre in High Rolls, NM. Features multiple living areas for entertaining and a beautiful wrap-around porch perfect for enjoying nature.

Annie Daniels - (575) 442-3444



SOLD!

\$595,000

HIGH ROLLS

53 Alta Vista Loop
Mountain home versatility with breathtaking views tucked into the mountainside. This home is designed to bring the outdoors in.

Annie Daniels - (575) 442-3444



\$955,000

HIGH ROLLS

61 Haynes Canyon
A rare mountain sanctuary where craftsmanship, astronomy, and luxury living come together beneath some of the darkest skies in the Southwest.

Annie Daniels - (575) 442-3444



\$354,000

MAYHILL

18 Carpenter Lane
This inviting 3 bedroom, 2 bath home is filled with natural light thanks to the abundance of windows that create a bright and welcoming atmosphere.

Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044



\$425,000

CLOUDCROFT

802 A Chautauqua Canyon Blvd.
Ideal investment opportunity featuring two homes. The updated 1,394 sq. ft. main residence is complemented by a 744 sq. ft. A-frame vacation rental.

Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044



\$819,000

MAYHILL

48 Milky Way
Architectural mountain retreat with sweeping views, wildlife, and an integrated roll-off-roof observatory for exceptional stargazing.

Megan Corvin - (575) 551-1999



UNDER CONTRACT

\$198,000

CLOUDCROFT

11 Center Road
Charming single-wide on 0.31 acres featuring open living, a primary suite, two guest rooms, and a covered deck among the tall pines.

Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044

Scan Here!



**for more listings
& property
details**



\$325,000

CLOUDCROFT

0 Evergreen Lane
Just over 12 acres of beautiful mountain property with the flexibility to camp in your RV, build a cabin or place a manufactured home.

Sylvia Humphreys - (575) 921-1094

Art, continued from page 15

Samantha Odom Art Gallery (300 Burro Ave. (575) 649-9951) Original paintings and affordable prints by Samantha Odom. Open 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday.

The Little Gallery (206 Burro Ave.) Fine arts and paintings by local artists, and funky souvenirs. Open Wednesday-Sunday 11:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. or by appointment.

Healing

Be in the Mountains Yoga & Massage Therapy (109 James Canyon Hwy (575) 415-4573) Cozy space and comfortable pace in the Village Plaza. Open by appointment at yogaincloudcroft.com

Cloudcroft Animal Hospital (1403 James Canyon Hwy (575) 682-2645) Critter care and adoptions. Open 8:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. and 1:30-5:00 p.m. Monday-Friday.

Cloudcroft Therapeutic Massage (404 Burro Ave.) Relax and recover upstairs at the OCEC building. Open by appointment at cloudcrofttherapeuticmassage.com

Laughing Leaf Dispensary (504 Burro Ave. (575) 682-1354) Locally-owned bud tender. Open 10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 9:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday, and 9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. Sunday.

Presbyterian Medical Center (76 James Canyon Hwy (575) 682-2542) Clinic by appointment or walk-in. Open 7:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. Monday-Friday.

Southwest Naturals CBD (506 Burro Ave. (575) 682-6022) Range of CBD products, vitamins, and supplements in store. Open Monday 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. and Friday-Sunday 10:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Trestle Medical Services (1200 James Canyon Hwy) Local family practitioner. Open Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays from 9:30-11:30 a.m. and 12:30-4:00 p.m. trestlemedical.com

Services

Atelier Art of Hair by Anna (505 Burro Ave. (415) 230-9506) Pamper your hair, style your photoshoot. Available by appointment vagaro.com/lacnb9/services

Bhair Neccessities (202 Burro Ave. (575) 518-9011) Classic color, cuts, and products. Available by appointment.

Cloudcroft Fitness (90 Swallow Pl.) Get moving with a range of class offerings and instructors. cloudcroftcycling.punchpass.com

Cloudcroft Village Office (201 Burro Ave.) Pay your water bill, attend village meetings, and more.cloudcroftvillage.com

Cloudsoft Laundry To Go (520-330-2613) Delivery service.

Crystal Tompkins Photography Family photos, headshots, business branding, soul sessions, and more. By appointment: crystaltompkinsphotography.com

Green Mountain Construction (500 Burro Ave. (575) 551-2811) Local development. Open 8:00 a.m-5:00 p.m. Monday-Friday. greenmountainconstr.com

High Valley Weaving School (90 Swallow Pl. 575-921-1020) Modern courses in ancient fiber techniques. Class schedules: highvalleyweavingschool.com

Pre-School and Extended Care (50 Chipmunk (575) 682-1264) Local childcare.

Rick Roger’s Auto & Equipment Repair (72 James Canyon Hwy (575) 682-3352) Gas and diesel mechanic ser-

vices. Open Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. and 1:00-5:00 p.m.

Sacramento Mountain Senior Services (212 Glorietta Ave. 575-682-3022) Cafeteria and social hub. mtnseniors.org

U.S. Post Office (20 Curlew Pl. (800) 275-8777) Mail and passport services. Open 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Monday-Friday, Saturday 9:30-11:30 a.m.

1CAT Trap & Release Program (100 Glorietta Ave. 575-682-7284) Non-profit feline care. Available by appointment.

Play

Deer Park Playground (30 Swallow Pl.) Behind the Burro St. Exchange. Picnic tables, easy downtown access.

Elevation Park (230 Mescalero Ave.) Disc golf, trailheads, and stargazing.

James Sewell Ice Rink (751 James Canyon Hwy) On the west end of Zenith Park. Seasonal skate rentals, snack bar, fireplace.



Pickleball Addicts of Cloudcroft (pickleballaddictsofcloudcroft.com) Join them! Regular seasonal play at Zenith Park.

Ski Cloudcroft (1920 1/2 Hwy 82) Southernmost ski area in NM—skiing, tubing, wood-fired pizza, and more.

The Lodge Golf Course (703 Corona Ave.) Scottish 9 in the clouds. Visit the pro shop for gear, snacks, and drinks.

Zenith Park (1001 James Canyon Hwy) Meadow in the middle of the village with playgrounds, ice rink, disc golf, walking, path, pickleball courts, and more.

Visit Cloudcroft

Sacramento Mountains Historical Museum and Pioneer Village (1000 Hwy 82) Study the Sacramentos

Sacramento Ranger District Forest Service Ranger Station (4 Lost Lodge Rd.) Visit for maps and forest facts

The Cloudcroft Chamber of Commerce (1001 James Canyon Hwy) Stop in to learn about local businesses and events

Michael Nivison Public Library (90 Swallow Pl.) Community hub for all ages

Day Trip

Alameda Park Zoo (35 minutes) Observe critters in the Southwest’s oldest zoo. Educational programs, a playground, and summer camps available. ci.alamogordo.nm.us/816/Alameda-Park-Zoo

American Armed Forces Museum (23 minutes) Archives, memorabilia, and memorial garden. Volunteers welcome. americanarmedforcesmuseum.com

Cadwallader Mountain Farms (14 minutes) High-elevation orchards with scenic views and “u-pick” seasons. Find them on Facebook for updates.

La Luz, NM (24 minutes) Tularosa Basin settlement at the base of the Sacramento Mountains.

Lincoln National Forest Scenic Byway (Varies) Winding drives past basin views, mountain meadows, wildlife, and beyond. fs.usda.gov/r03/lincoln/recreation/opportunities/scenic-drives

Mayhill, NM (23 minutes) Neighbors to the east.

Museum of Space History (30 minutes): Exhibits, education, memorials, playground, and theater. nmspacemuseum.org

Nichols Ranch and Orchards (35 minutes) Seasonal harvests and events. nicholsranchandorchards.com

Oliver Lee Memorial State Park (47 minutes) Desert camping, historic site, and hiking. emnrd.nm.gov/spd/find-a-park/oliver-lee-memorial-state-park/

Sacramento, NM (48 minutes) Mountain hamlet nestled in the Sacramentos.

Silver Lake (17 minutes) RV and tent camping, fishing, and more. mescaleroapachetribe.com/parks-rec/silver-lake-official/

Three Rivers Petroglyph Site (59 minutes) One of the largest and most interesting rock art sites in the Southwest. blm.gov/visit/three-rivers-petroglyph-site

Timberon, NM (55 minutes) Mountain community surrounded by gorgeous forest—gas up on your way, no station for miles. timberon.org

Tularosa Basin Museum of History (31 minutes) area history with a full research library, gift shop, and bookstore.

Valley of Fires (80 minutes) Lava park featuring trails, visitor center, picnic areas, and campsite hookups. blm.gov/visit/valley-fires-recreation-area

Weed, NM (41 minutes) Mountain community, home of the Weed Bluegrass Festival. weednm.org

White Sands National Park (45 minutes) Otherworldly chalky dunes—pack sunscreen and water. nps.gov/whsa/index.htm Railroad Dr.)



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Page 18

Mountain Monthly

Events



Pickleball on the village courts.
The Mountain Smash tournament returns Sept. 5–6.

Community

Art Society Labor Day Sale · Old Red Brick Schoolhouse | Fri.–Sun., Sept. 4–6 | Fri. noon–5 p.m., Sat. 10 a.m.–5 p.m., Sun. 10 a.m.–3 p.m. | free. Fourteen local artists open the co-op for the holiday weekend — paintings, photography, pottery, pine-needle baskets and prints.

Church of the Epiphany Garage Sale · Grand and Chipmunk, left of Family Dollar | Sat., Sept. 5 | 8:30 a.m.–1 p.m. | free. One day only. Estate jewelry, antiques and household goods; proceeds fund the church’s outreach work. 575-495-3811

Battle of the Food Trucks and Craft Show · Zenith Park | Sat.–Sun., Sept. 5–6 | Sat. 10 a.m.–5 p.m., Sun. 10 a.m.–4 p.m. | free. Food trucks park in the meadow alongside a craft show. Vote for People’s Choice. coolcloud-croft.com

Heritage Day Car Show · Zenith Park | Sun., Sept. 6 | 10 a.m.–5 p.m. | \$10 to enter, free to look. Classic and custom cars fill the park. Best in Show and second- and third-place honors. 575-682-2733

CLOC Melodrama · CLOC Pavilion, Zenith Park | Sept. 4, 5, 6, 18 and 19 | 7:30 p.m. | free. The Inventor’s Daughter, or... The Villain Made a Grab for the Lab. Cheer the hero and boo the villain.

Bears Homecoming · CHS Football Field | Fri., Sept. 11. The Bears host homecoming. See Peak Performance, p. 25.

Lumberjack Day at Ski Cloudcroft · 1920 U.S. Highway 82 | Sat., Sept. 19 | registration 8 a.m., competition 9 a.m. | \$10 per event, free to watch. Timber sports pros go at it with axe and saw. Vendors and a kids halftime show. cloudcroftlumberjackday.com

87th Otero County Fair and Rodeo · 401 Fairgrounds Road, Alamogordo | Thu.–Sun., Sept. 24–27. Livestock, pie, carnival and rodeo, an hour down the hill. oterocountyfair.com

Art and Music

CAS Co-op Gallery · Old Red Brick Schoolhouse, 90 Swallow Pl. | Saturdays, 11 a.m.–4 p.m. | free. New hours this season, matched to the library next door. Fourteen local artists, all originals.

Artist of the Month: Lorelei Jones · Black Bear Coffee Shop, 200 Burro

Ave. | all month | regular hours. The gallery wall belongs to Lorelei Jones. Readers met her family on p. 9.

Sip and Paint · Noisy Water Winery, 505 Burro Ave. | Mon., Sept. 14 | 6 p.m. | ticketed. Instructor-led paint night, second Monday of the month. No experience wanted; materials and a drink included.

Get Outside

Mountain Smash Pickleball Tournament · Zenith Park courts | Sat.–Sun., Sept. 5–6 | \$25 registration, \$30 per bracket. Doubles in two age brackets, plus beginners’ open doubles and skinny singles. Benefits Cloudcroft Track and Field. pickleballn-den.com

High Altitude Classic · Start 10 a.m. at High Altitude, downtown; finish 2 p.m. at Elevation Park | Sun., Sept. 20. Ten, 13.5 and 17 miles of singletrack, fifteen years after two friends brought a dead race back to life. Sells out early. Cover story, p. 1.

Mountaintop Volleyball Tournament · Cloudcroft High School | Fri.–Sat., Sept. 18–19. Mountain schools on one floor for two days.

Ruidoso Runfest · Wingfield Park, Ruidoso | Fri.–Sat., Sept. 18–19. Friday opens with a 5K and a kids 1K; Saturday brings the marathon, the half and the State-Forty-Seven Road 50K. race-roster.com

Dark Skies

The dark week · Sept. 9–13 | after 10 p.m. The new moon falls late on the 10th, making the nights around it the darkest of the month. At 8,600 feet with the village lights behind you, the Milky Way runs the whole length of the sky.

The equinox · Tue., Sept. 22, 6:06 p.m. Autumn arrives at six minutes past six. From here to December the nights lengthen faster than at any other time of year — good news, if you came for the stars.

Neptune at opposition · Fri., Sept. 25 | all night. The most distant planet makes its closest approach and stays up until dawn. Binoculars will show a faint blue-green star in Pisces.

The Harvest Moon · Sat., Sept. 26 | rises at sunset. The full moon nearest the equinox, the one that gave farmers an extra hour of working light. September has no meteor shower to speak of; the Orionids arrive Oct. 21.



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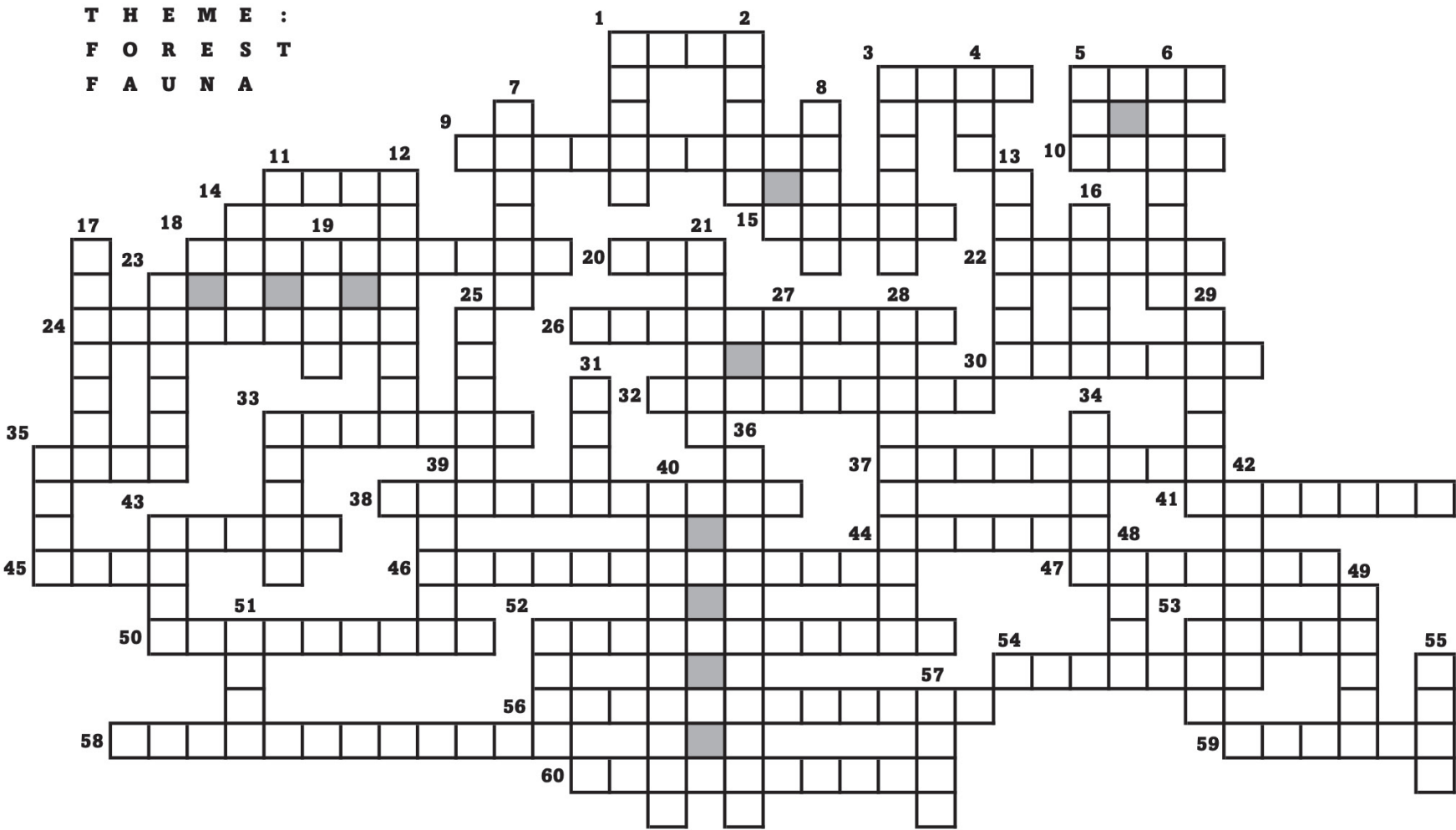
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“Forest Fauna”

THEME :
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FAUNA



ACROSS:

- 1 - Precious Stinging Pollinators
- 3 - Rib Roast, or slang for antlers
- 5 - Its really just a big hole underground
- 9 - State bird “beep! beep!”
- 10 - Word for a male ungulate
- 11 - Up to a million of these can fly out of 5 across each night!
- 15 - This bird is hunted, and its eggs pickled
- 18 - A semi-flightless bird, popularly hunted
- 20 - _____ a 19 Down, a female 19 Down
- 22 - Tail slapping tree fellers
- 24 - A cuddly omnivore, and a coffee shop
- 26 - Endangered bird of prey, legally contentious
- 30 - Song bird with yellow and orange plumage, Western
- 32 - Man-made mythical mammal
- 33 - Fast birds nesting under eaves
- 35 - Small bird, loud and fast for its size
- 37 - Antelope adjacent with curved black antlers
- 38 - Endangered (extinct?) butterfly
- 41 - _____ (noun): The science of organisms and their environments
- 43 - What most of these have sticking out of their end
- 44 - Taxonomy term for dog
- 45 - Bambi in considered a:
- 46 - Rosy reared raptor
- 47 - A little house on/ a home companion
- 50 - Quill coated rodent
- 52 - Swift-winged sugar addict
- 53 - These “wild” horses, can in fact be called:
- 54 - Legendary cryptid, local guides available for your next search
- 56 - Apex predator of the puma family
- 58 - Small endangered rodent, legally contentious
- 59 - Native to South America, gets confused with 55 down
- 60 - Member of the crow family, blue like its brother (w/o the ‘s)

DOWN:

- 1 - Small donkey on main street
- 2 - Pepe le pew for one
- 3 - “Silly _____ Trix are for kids.”
- 4 - Word for a female ungulate
- 5 - Don’t get between a mama and her:
- 6 - If its circling above, you may be cooked.
- 7 - Burrowing rodent who dances at the end of Caddyshack
- 8 - Apache Brown Rainbow
- 12 - Rocky is a Moose, and Bullwinkle is a:
- 13 - Tufted eared wildcat
- 14 - Suckers stuck on deer, and maybe even one on your dog
- 16 - Quoth the _____, Nevermore
- 17 - Slang for 18 across, or one who eats fast?
- 19 - Common Cervid, many a Bambi in the village right now
- 21 - The most common livestock out there (backwards)
- 23 - Trash panda
- 25 - ACME’s most loyal customer
- 27 - Larger member of the Cervid family
- 28 - Winged bark hammerer. Woody for one
- 29 - Taxonomy term for cat
- 31 - Blind burrowing rodent
- 33 - Shelled slug
- 34 - A big horned trophy
- 35 - The big bad
- 36 - An enormous raptor, symbol of the SPQR
- 39 - Large aquatic bird, can be blue
- 40 - Subterranean gecko-esque amphibian
- 42 - What you don’t want you pets to “go” on
- 43 - What a Bambi will take under a tree (just leave her be)
- 44 - Sound a dog makes, no o’s, g’s, or h’s needed
- 49 - Native to South America, gets confused with 59 across
- 51 - Word for broad backside of a large animal
- 52 - It’s a house for you, but the outdoors for them
- 53 - Cunning member of 44 across
- 55 - A jazzy word for animal droppings
- 57 - Trophy introduced from African savannah



Meet the Constructor

Long-time solver, first-time puzzler **Wells Vaiana** has lived in Cloudcroft since 2018, and his love for the village is clearly expressed in each puzzle, which is created without AI or any kind of online assistance. Wells is proud to be contributing these puzzles, and plans to continue doing so until they eventually drive him insane. Enjoy!

dude.wells@gmail.com



Senior Employment Program

- Are you 55 years or older?
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If you answered “yes” to the above questions you may be eligible for SEP. Reach out to the Sacramento Mountains Senior center director on how to enroll.

The Senior Employment Program is a training program funded by the state of NM through ALTSD and the Non-Metro AAA. The positions are for 20 hours a week.

Call us at 5756823022



Adrian and Destiny roast green chile at the Highland along James Canyon Highway. Look for their return in September.

Mountain Life

Folks Caught on Camera Living Their Best Mountain Life



Miyah and Kylie enjoy mommy and me time with babies Blake and Presley at High Rollin'



Tiger Alley shreds bow and chords at the Shady Pines Chamber Players' stage



The Texas Tech University track team visits the Be in the Mountains Yoga studio



Trustee Keith Hamilton and crew visit White Sands



Catch up on the news and the latest trim at Bhair Necessities on Burro



Richard and Homer the Jackalope scope out Smokey Bear's origins



Storytime with Gail at the Library: Fridays at 10:30



Paint-along with Debbie O'Connor at Noisy Water Winery



Debbi McCurdy’s friends and family completed her fundraising work for an emergency helipad in Cloudcroft

Life-Saving Dream Realized

New Helipad Dedicated to Debbi McCurdy’s Legacy
By Hilary Kitzman

On a sunny weekend afternoon, community members, first responders, elected officials, and representatives from **Air Methods**, an air medical service, gathered on Mescalero Avenue near the Cloudcroft Disc Golf Course to celebrate the dedication of Cloudcroft’s new emergency medical helipad, a project that many say will save lives for years to come.

The event was both a celebration and a remembrance. The **Debbi McCurdy Memorial Helipad** was formally dedicated in honor of Cloudcroft resident Debbi, whose passion and determination helped drive the project forward before her unexpected passing earlier this year. Family members joined residents, village leaders, firefighters, and emergency medical personnel as the community came together to honor her legacy and mark a significant advancement in emergency medical services for the mountain.

Fire Chief **Erich Wuersching** spoke to community members: “Debbi McCurdy is the reason why we are here today.”

“Debbi worked really hard to raise

money, as did a lot of people in this village,” said Debbi’s sister Patti Cowsert. “And just everybody worked so hard, and today was just such a happy occasion to see everything come together.”

Why the Helipad Matters

For a mountain community where weather, distance, and terrain can complicate emergency responses, rapid air transport can mean the difference between life and death. The helipad provides a designated landing area for medical helicopters responding to critical emergencies across the Sacramento Mountains.

“It’s a really important staple for you guys up here,” said **Devin Vierling**, Flight Paramedic with Air Methods, an air medical transport company that works closely with our mountain

responders. “We know it’s difficult terrain. Hospital access is very difficult, so we’re here to make sure that we can facilitate that transport and do the best we can with that.”



The new emergency medical helipad on Mescalero Avenue, dedicated in honor of Debbi McCurdy



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Scouts refinish the Zenith Park picnic tables

A Special Scouting Around

Cloudcroft gains an Eagle Scout and community project with Connor Smith

If you saw Troop 958’s Connor Smith around Cloudcroft in July, he was probably working on his Eagle Scout project.

Connor chose to refinish the picnic tables at the CLOC Pavilion. The tables provide extra seating for the Cloudcroft Light Opera Company’s melodramas and for other events at the pavilion and in Zenith Park.

Connor has been a full-time student at New Mexico Tech since last year, including this summer, while working part-time in Socorro. He spent weekends coming home to Cloudcroft for Scouting activities and to keep his Eagle project moving. His 18th birthday was coming up in early August, so there wasn’t much room on the calendar.

I was Connor’s Scoutmaster long before I became Committee Chair, so I’ve known him since he was young. I remember him crossing over from Cub Scouts at a Santa Land event. He was a quiet little kid then. It has been a privilege to watch him grow into the young man who was ready to take on something like this.

There was more to the project than sanding and refinishing picnic tables. Some of the tables belong to the Village and some belong to CLOC, so Connor had to work with both the Village Manager and the president of CLOC to get the project approved. Once he had a plan, he had to organize the work and get people to help carry it out.

The workdays were July 11 and 12, and a lot of volunteers came out. Our Scouting families were particularly well represented, and Mayor Wiley stopped by to view the progress.

Connor got the project finished before his birthday deadline, while carrying a full college course load. Many people

helped, but it was his drive to become an Eagle Scout that nobody could do for him. He had plenty of opportunities to give up, believe me.

Connor’s Eagle project kept a lot of us busy in July, but there was plenty going on around the rest of the Pack and Troop, too.

On July 4, Scouts from both Pack 958 and Troop 958 marched in the Cloudcroft Fourth of July parade. They carried the colors, including both the Cub Scout and Troop flags, with a good turnout from Scouts of all ages.

On the weekend of July 18, our Scouts opened Museum Fest at the ice rink with a color guard led by Connor Smith, as one of his last acts as senior patrol leader.

Most recently, on August 1, Cloudcroft scouts of all ages provided the color guard for the annual Otero County Electric Co-op meeting at the Cloudcroft High School gym, led by Kelton Farmer.

With such an unusual number of flag-related ceremonies this month, they are getting good at it!

It was a full summer for the Scouts, but for Connor, July marked the finish line on something he had decided to do himself. He chose the project, worked out how to make it happen, brought people together, and got it done, all while going to college.

I’ve watched Connor grow up through this program. He has come a long way, and he has become a fine young man. It starts with kids camping in the woods and learning outdoor skills, but along the way they are taught about faith and ethics, how to take responsibility, and how to lead. Not every kid is going to be an Eagle Scout, and that’s perfectly fine.

In Scouting, every kid gets opportunities to take responsibility, lead, and discover what they are capable of. For some, like Connor, making Eagle is the icing on the cake.

Contact us: info@CloudcroftScouts.org

—by Greg Crinklaw

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Rut goes full swing in September (Photo: Bobby Moberly)

Life in the Sacramentos

Elk bugles, blooming gardens, and the abundance of a mountain September
BY LYN CANHAM

September is one of my favorite months here in these mountains. It represents the concept of abundance to me, which is a healthy frame of mind to have. One thing to love about September is its abundance of visible and audible wildlife, with the Rocky Mountain elk the capstone experience.

As described by me in the past, as well as by others in this paper, the height of the annual bull elk rut is the last two weeks of September. Elk cows come into estrus (“heat”) in September, and the mating gets underway. There is

only about a two-month period when the cows are (intermittently) receptive to the bulls, which puts an incredible strain on the bulls, as they have to maintain their vigilance while avoiding the hunters’ bows or rifles. A female accepts only the largest and strongest male, which is, of course, how nature ensures species survival. There are a couple of cues the cows can use to aid natural selection. When the bulls bugle through their noses, the shriek is accompanied by a guttural groan, and the groan signals the male’s size and strength. It can be heard for over a mile, announcing the male’s presence to distant females as well as males.

“The big, strong bull” gathers as many cows as possible – his way of ensuring that his genes get passed. Chemical cues that he detects with his tongue tell him which females are fertile, and he can collect as many as 20 in one season. It is the retention of so many cows that is the trickiest part: he must fend off rivals, those other bulls that come when

antlers outstretched, can in fact result in serious injury, even death. Bulls also rub their antlers against smaller trees and shrubs to remove remaining velvet and polish them, and in the process leave scent on the trees, shrubs, and ground that attracts cows and intimidates rival bulls.

Some summers we see and hear fewer elk than others, whether bulls, cows, calves, or whole families. It seems to depend on the amount of monsoon rain gracing one’s area, refreshing their grass and food sources. This August and the last two were the driest we have ever seen, so maybe the elk were more concentrated in wetter parts of the mountains (i.e., west of here). In 2023, we saw large herds of elk several times, including at least 16 new calves. This summer

we saw only a few of each, mostly cows, and less often.

Another showy feature of abundant September is flowers, both planted and wild-growing. The September forest features beautiful purple or white Asters, brilliant red Skyrocket Gilia, lavender-colored Campanula, and golden Snakeweed. The bounty in our own flower gardens is due to late summer bloomers, such as the perennials Russian sage (Perovskia), hyssop mint (Agastache), goldenrod (Solidago), Joe Pye weed, and various coneflowers, along with re-bloomers like catmints, sages, columbines, Jupiter’s beards, and yarrows. September gardens are also packed to the gills with late-summer (re-seeding) annuals like asters, zinnias, black-eyed Susans, coneflowers, Blanket flowers, Hollyhocks, bee balm, and beautiful giant sunflowers, many of which are an important food source for the birds that frequent our forest and properties at this time of year.

When you have big, beautiful flowers volunteering for you like this, there isn’t really any excuse not to cut a few of them for a vase to delight the inside of your home at this time of year.





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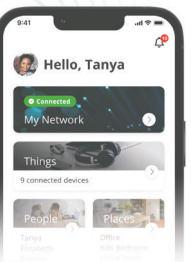
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they hear him bugle, and their clashes,



Portia Portacarrero stands up and out on the field

Peak Performance

Fall Sports are in full swing, Seniors are gearing up for their final year, and Portia Portacarrero earns her place on the Cloudcroft football team.

BY PAULA FINCH

Fall sports are officially underway in Cloudcroft, bringing busy afternoons, packed schedules, and plenty of Bear pride back to Cloudcroft Municipal Schools. Football, volleyball, cross-country, and cheerleading athletes spent the summer preparing for the season ahead, and the energy is already building across the athletic program.

The Ponytail Beneath the Helmet

Among the many athletes beginning their fall seasons is Cloudcroft Middle School **eighth grader, Portia Portacarrero**, entering her second year on the Bears football team. Portia is the team’s only girl, but she is far more than a unique face on the roster—she starts on both offense and defense and has earned her place through preparation, persistence, and a willingness to compete.

Over the summer, Portia trained with the Cloudcroft High School football team as she prepared for the middle school season. Her goal is to continue playing football at the high school level next year, and her summer work gave her an early look at the intensity, discipline, and physical demands of the next level.

Proving She Belongs

At the Bears’ first scrimmage of the season, Portia competed against several teams and faced the same physical challenges as every other player on the field. During the scrimmage, some Hol-

loman players called out to “crush the girl,” signaling that opponents had taken notice of her.

Portia answered on the field. She took several hard hits as a starter on both sides of the ball and returned for the next play each time. Her toughness and determination drew the attention of spectators, teammates, and opponents. In a sport where girls are rarely seen in tackle-football helmets, Portia has shown that effort, preparation, and heart matter more than expectations.

After the scrimmage, Portia also spoke with several Holloman players at the postgame barbeque—another sign that her presence on the field is starting conversations and challenging assumptions. While some may first notice the ponytail coming out of her helmet, her performance makes one thing clear: she is a determined and passionate football player.

A Season Worth Watching

As fall sports continue, Cloudcroft has much to look forward to, from senior athletes making the most of their final season to younger Bears like Portia building a future in their sport. Her story is one of grit, confidence, and determination, and a reminder that athletes do not have to fit a traditional image to earn their place on the field.

September brings two major opportunities for the community to cheer on Cloudcroft Bears. The **Bears’ Homecoming game** is set for **September 11th** at the **CHS Football Field**, and the **annual Volleyball Mountaintop Tournament** is scheduled for **September 18-19**.



Baja Fish Tacos

Dylan Kincaid shares a fresh dinner recipe

What makes it a Baja Style Fish Taco? Typically, a fried white fish with cabbage slaw and salsa on a corn tortilla. We kicked these up a notch by using pickle juice as the acid in the slaw and adding fresh cilantro and jalapeño, used an amber beer for the batter, roasted poblano cream sauce and topped with the remaining fried batter to add a little more crunch.

Yields 4 - 6 tacos depending on fillet sizes.

Main Ingredients:

Fish:

Make sure fish is completely thawed out if previously frozen. Cut each fillet in half lengthwise to give you two equal portions per fillet. Pat dry and lightly season with salt and pepper and place in fridge until needed.

Slaw:

1 lb white fish fillets	1/2 Head Red or Green Cabbage
1/2 cup Sour Cream	8 Limes
1 cup Plain Greek Yogurt	4 Corn Tortillas
1 bunch Fresh Cilantro; divided	Oil - vegetable, canola, or avocado will work
4 Poblano Peppers	Splash pickle juice
2 Jalapeño	
2 Cloves Garlic	



Carefully cut cabbage in half and thinly slice - I used red and green but one or the other is fine. Chop fresh jalapeño and 1/2 bunch cilantro. Add to large bowl, season with salt, pepper, juice of 4 limes, and a splash of your favorite pickle juice. Mix well and refrigerate.

Batter:

1/2 cup flour	1 tsp Pepper
1/2 cup corn starch	1 tsp Garlic Powder
1 tsp baking powder	1 tsp Onion Powder
1 tsp Paprika	1/2 tsp Cayenne
1 tsp Salt	1 beer (any amber style beer)

Whisk together and chill in fridge while prepping the rest of the ingredients. Since beers vary in size, use roughly 12 oz, adding gradually to obtain consistency comparable to a thin pancake batter.

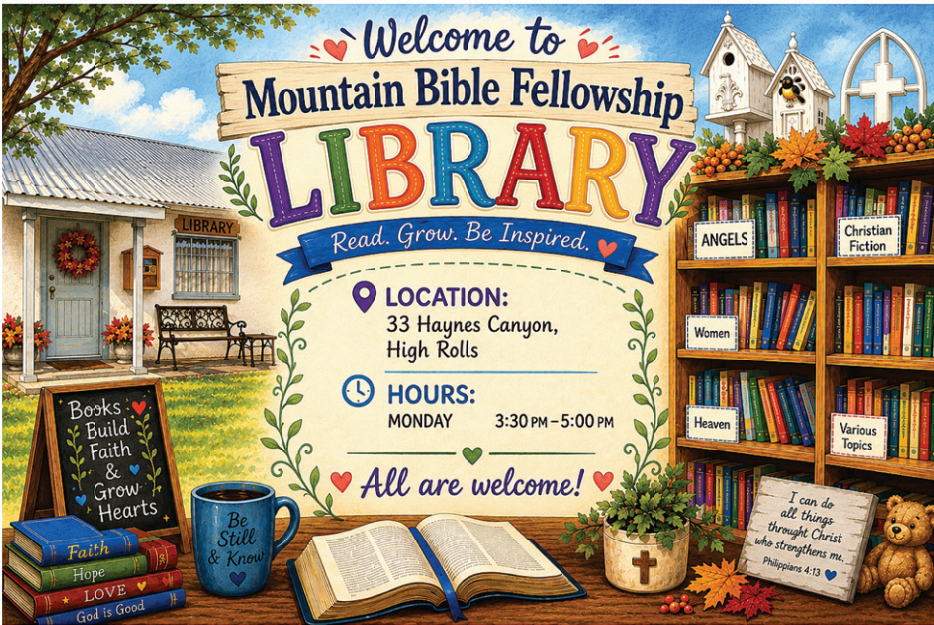
Sauce:

Slice poblano peppers in half, remove stem and seeds. Oil and salt the halved poblanos and roast with garlic cloves on a foil lined baking sheet at 400° until blistered and charred - roughly 20-30 min cook time- remove skin from peppers - add to blender and blend with Greek yogurt, sour cream, juice of 2 limes, roasted garlic, and 1/2 bunch cilantro until smooth. Salt and pepper to taste. To thicken sauce, add more yogurt. To thin sauce, add a splash of water.

Heat oil to 350°. Dip fillets into batter to evenly coat and carefully fry in the oil - don’t overcrowd the pot and gently loosen them if they stick to the bottom - fry fillets until they’re golden brown and cooked through. Place on a wire rack to drain - salt them while still hot.

Once done with the fish - Use a slotted spoon to slowly drizzle remaining batter into the hot oil to make the crunchy toppings. Remove and let drain on paper towel. Season with a pinch of salt while still hot.

Toast the tortillas in a lightly oiled skillet until warm and lightly browned. Spread a layer of sauce onto the tortilla, add the fried fish, top with slaw, add a bit more sauce and finish with the crispy beer batter bits and a squeeze of lime.



The First Alamogordo Lumber Company Timber

Part One of the First Sacramento Timber story finale.
BY LYNN MELTON

This story starts where “The First Sacramento Timber” story ends. Readers may wish to access that story via the Mountain Monthly archives at mountainmonthly.com, May-June-July 2026. The Alamogordo and Sacramento Mountains railroad made use of timber from the Baird sawmill near Wooten until they could cut timber on land acquired from the U.S. government, north from present day Bailey Canyon.

The author has chosen to create an imaginary interview with W.H. Bailey that took place in 1924. In such an interview, the author is filling in gaps between facts. In doing so, he may be wrong, but he never intentionally creates false statements, and the words he puts into W.H. Bailey’s mouth are realistic.

In the summer of 1924, I made the long trip to Maine to seek out **W. H. Bailey (WHB)**, the man from whom we get the name “Bailey Canyon”.

Lynn Melton (LAM): Good day. I am hoping that you are the Mr. Bailey, who used to work for the Alamogordo Lumber Company

W.H. Bailey (WHB): I am, but that was a long time ago. What has put you onto the Lumber Company?

LAM: Well, Mr. Bailey, I didn’t have enough to do, and I got interested in how the Alamogordo & Sacramento Mountains railroad was built. One thing led to another, and I let myself get into the early days of the Alamogordo Lumber Company. I found a lot of newspaper stuff about the big sawmill in Alamogordo, but precious little about how they got their logs.

WHB: Yep, they always run on and on about the money guys and have nothing to say about the men who do the work.

Have a seat. You are in for an interesting afternoon. And no more of that Mr. Bailey stuff, just call me Wilbur.

LAM: I’ve got the time. Let it rip.

WHB: Might as well start way back. I grew up logging in the Maine woods. The days of tall masts for ships were past, but every man and his dog wanted to build houses. Massachusetts, New York, had pretty well chewed up their forests. We logged, rolled the logs into the river, and they floated down to the mills. Yep, I definitely remember that we did not float logs in New Mexico.

Anyway, by the time I was thirty, I had done nearly every kind of job. Cut trees. Fished logs at the mills. Cut lumber in the mill. Ran the night crew. Did well enough that I got the day job running the sales and freighting.

One day, summer 1898, somebody left a newspaper lying around, and there was an ad for someone to set up a sawmill in Alamogordo, New Mexico Territory. I felt a tad adventuresome -- see New Mexico and all -- so I answered and got the job.

There were four of us from Maine. J.A. Eddy had ordered a big sawmill -- \$100,000 – but he was into ranching and mining, money man putting together a railroad. He did not have the foggiest how to set it up or run it. Lucky for him that he managed to hire two mill wrights in the bunch. We got it set up and humming by the first week in October.

LAM: You were in the two?

WHB: No. I’ve done many sawmill jobs, but I never set one up.

As we sorted things out, it turned out that me and the other guy knew how to cut timber. He wanted to get back to Maine, so that left me. Eddy asked me to stay on and get timber to his fancy sawmill. If I had asked enough questions then, I probably would have got me a ticket to Maine.

LAM: There were problems?

WHB: Young man, it’s going to be a long afternoon. The whole timber thing was built on a lot of ifs and hopes.

Eddy and his bunch – Hawkins was in on it – set up the Alamogordo Lumber Company with \$200,000 in capital. Then they go and spend \$100,000 of that on the Alamogordo sawmill, with their money men backers wanting fast bucks from timber. A full half on the sawmill and they still had to buy engines, log cars, log loaders, the who she-bang.

I’ll tell you the story as much as I was able to put together the pieces. I never was on the inside.

Let’s start with Hawkins. He had put together a “save bucks” scheme to buy up veteran’s land scrip on the cheap and use it to get government land with timber on it. Early on, April 1898, he got ten sections in the Sacramentos. You said “Bailey Canyon” earlier. About half of that was between “Bailey Canyon” and LaLuz Canyon.

H.A. Sumner was building the railroad up into Sacramento Mountains, the railroad to haul timber to the sawmill. Tough job. Steep. Sharp curves. Any rate, he can’t get the railroad to Hawkin’s timber by the time the sawmill was ready.

He gets the railroad to Toboggan Gulch – so Sumner called it – about mid-November. He built a wye there and – slam bang -- pulled his crews out to go build Eddy’s EP&NE north to the Salado coal, the big money maker Eddy had sold to his backers.

LAM: Yes, he was going to make a lot of money selling coal in El Paso.

WHB: That left the end of the A&SM about a mile short of Hawkins’ timber lands. I tell you, my friend, I had rolled logs into the river and fished them out at the end, but I never had run a railroad, much less built one. And on the cheap. I had to beg over and over to get Eddy to let loose of money.

LAM: Couldn’t you cut timber on the way from Toboggan to Hawkins’ sections. Start making money while you built the railroad spur all the way to the sections?

WHB: Nice idea, but no. No. No. You see Frank Davidson and his buddies had homesteaded Toboggan Canyon and Fresno Canyon all the way to Hawkins’ timber, even had their patents. They wanted real money for their timber, and Eddy didn’t want to pay them when he had Hawkins’ timber just waiting for the saws.

JD Baird had a sawmill close to Wooten, but that closed down as soon as Sumner

got to Toboggan and stopped buying ties and trestle timbers.

I had to build a railroad on the cheap, and Sumner took the good working crews with him. We built it up the shady side of the canyon, barely above the muddy middle. Had to build on the shady side, you see, ‘cause there was a old wagon road on the sunny, dry side. Sumner used the 1875 Railroad law to build over old roads, but logging companies like the ALC couldn’t do that. Eddy had to pay Davidson to let us cross his land, and he even fussed about that.

I got what men I could find – Texas farmers that said they knew how to timber, a few stray Mexicans, a few homesick Hopi Indians. Nobody wanted to move much dirt.

Eddy had JD Baird make one last hoorah with his sawmill before it folded. Cut us enough ties and some trestle timbers. Eddy had to freight us rails and spikes, even though he kept harping on the costs and delays. On and on about how his sawmill was ready first week in October, just sitting there with no logs to saw.

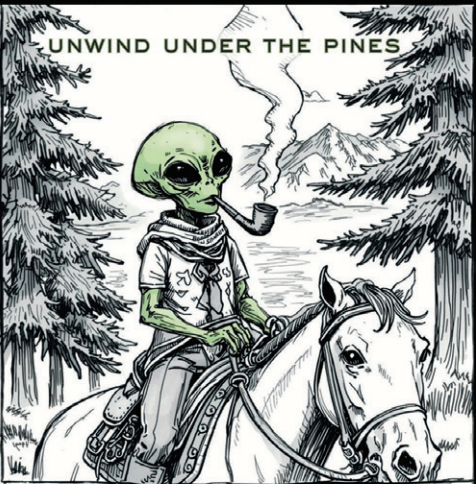
Of course, he owned the locomotive and log cars. Engine 101 – that big engine that had so much trouble staying on the curvy tracks -- made the run to bring us the rails and hardware. So he did take care of that.

We got to what the locals came to call “Bailey’s Camp”, and Eddy sent 101 and a few log cars. We loaded up his log cars. Switched engines at Toboggan, and Engine 102 – that little 2-4-2T engine Baldwin made to exhibit at the 1893 World’s Fair -- made the run to Alamogordo. Eddy got the first load

of Sacramento logs to his sawmill on December 1. A little over three weeks.

LAM: That is great. You made it work. I guess the rest was pretty routine.

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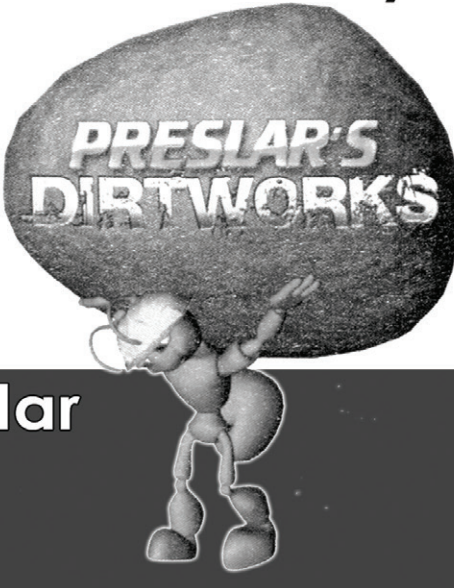
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Passings



Chessie Lee Brown

Oct. 19, 1933 – July 29, 2026

“Chessie Lee Brown, 92, of Rio Rancho, NM, passed away on July 29, 2026, at 6:15 p.m., after a courageous fight with kidney failure.

Chessie was born October 19, 1933, in House, NM, to Alvin Wharton and Callie Lee Wharton (Henry). She weighed just two pounds at birth and loved to tell the story of her first crib – a dresser drawer – a fitting start for a woman who spent her whole life proving that big things come in small packages.

She was raised in Mountainair, NM, and graduated high school there in 1951. That same year, she married Kenneth Brown of Cedarvale, NM, and the two set off for Ridgecrest, California, hoping to make their fortune. Although fortune didn’t quite find them there, Chessie found steady work at Bank of America until the birth of her first son, Dwayne, followed with the arrival of Mike three years later. She then devoted herself to being a homemaker while her boys were young, and later found her entrepreneurial spirit as a Tupperware dealer, at which she was quite successful.

In 1977, Chessie and Kenneth returned home to New Mexico to be closer to their aging parents, settling in Robinhood Park between Cloudcroft and Mayhill. There, Chessie became a bank manager at First National Bank in Cloudcroft, a position she held for many years. She also volunteered with the James Canyon Fire Department and served as secretary of the Robinhood Park Water Association – always finding ways to serve the community she loved.

After 60 years of marriage, Kenneth passed away in 2012. Chessie moved to Santa Fe to live with her youngest son, Michael (Mike), and a couple of years later the two relocated to Rio Rancho, where she remained until her passing.

On June 25, 2026, Chessie suffered a stroke that took the use of the left side of her body. After two and a half weeks in the hospital, she was transferred to a rehabilitation hospital, where she fought hard despite her body’s inability to recover. She was scheduled to be released on August 1, after three weeks of rehabilitation, and her family had already begun searching for a residential care facility that could provide the care she would need. On July 28, she experienced sudden shortness of breath and was rushed back to the emergency room, where doctors discovered her kidneys were causing dangerous fluid retention in her limbs, lungs, and heart. In the early morning hours that followed, Chessie and her sons made the difficult, loving decision to choose comfort care, sparing her from dialysis given

the unlikelihood she would ever stand or walk again.

Chessie is survived by her son Dwayne (wife Cressie) and grandson Riley, of Mayhill, NM; and her son Mike, of Rio Rancho, NM, along with his children: Drew (wife Jenny) of Ontario, California, and his daughter and granddaughter, Renee and Khloe, of Phoenix, AZ.

Chessie loved her magazines, game shows, word puzzles, and scrolling through Facebook. One of her greatest joys was calling family members to catch up and keep up with all the family “gossip.” Standing not even five feet tall, she was nonetheless a giant in her family – never mean, never controlling, yet somehow always managing to run the household with nothing but love and understanding. A devoted Christian woman, she is now celebrating in heaven, reunited with all the family who went before her.

A memorial service will be held Aug. 29 at 1 p.m. at the Mayhill Church of Christ with a dinner to follow in the church fellowship hall. The meal will be provided but if you would like to contribute a side dish to complement a taco bar, you are more than welcome to.”

— The family of Chessie Lee Brown



Judy E. Henry

Judy E. Henry, 84, began her forever journey October 20, 2025. Born in Plymouth, Michigan, June 15, 1941 to Ernest and Mary Henry and lived there until she went off to college. Judy taught Elementary school for several years in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, on the Canadian border.

In 1972, Judy began her travels in the US in a 1968 VW camper van. In 1974, she started working for the US Forest Service in Cloudcroft, NM. The small mountain village had enchanted her the summer of 1973 as a place she might like to live! Judy worked in Fire Prevention & Detection & Recreation. Several years later she worked on a Wildland Fire Engine. Over the F.S. years, Judy felt very lucky to work with “the guys” from Tulie who taught her so much about fire, tools and the workings of wildland fire engines. They were so patient!

Work with the Forest Service was seasonal, so off-season Judy worked at “The Lodge” in housekeeping, started a day-care school at Sunspot for the winter, house sat, and did animal care to keep the burritos on the table.

One winter, Judy traveled through Mexico and saw Cancun before the hotel invasion. She traveled through Belize & Guatemala at a time when the world was a friendlier place.

While the USA was celebrating its 200th birthday, Judy traveled to Aus-

tralia and New Zealand. Judy decided to stay in the South Pacific to experience the warm waters and the activities she was so fond of: scuba diving, snorkeling, kayaking, sailing and of course swimming and eating the local seafood! She funded her adventures by taking babysitting and housekeeping gigs.

When Judy returned to Cloudcroft, she was hired by the Post Office and worked her way up to postmaster. She began in Mountainair and then moved onto Cloudcroft, where she retired in 2004! The National Postmasters Convention was held in Albuquerque-1994-Smokey Bears 50th year celebration. Judy stepped in as Smokey Bear at a packed Convention Center.

In the early 1990s, Judy read about Rails to Trails, in other states and thought a similar trail system would be perfect for the Cloudcroft area. Judy planted the seed for the wonderful idea with a newly retired engineer, Tom Springer, who had lots of time, energy and know how. Tom nurtured the seed and it grew and flourished into a very impressive trail system on mainly Forest Service land. Trestles were restored and miles of trails cleared on railroad beds. The Rails to Trails group and the Forest Service coordinated the projects. A large group of volunteers made these trails possible.

Another of Judy’s projects was working with the Cloudcroft Village Office, when Dorothy Mills was Mayor, to secure an agreement, so the residents of Lost Lodge could buy bulk water from the Village. Several Lost Lodge residents were in charge of the water money and paid the Village Office the bulk water rate, minimizing the paperwork the office had to deal with.

Judy was involved in the early formation of emergency services at the Cloudcroft Fire Department, becoming an EMT, until the logistics became too difficult.

When Judy was on duty, she had to drive to the Fire Department and look for a communication radio, they were not abundant. This was before Lost Lodge had telephone service and many years before cell phones existed. It was a very snowy and cold winter, so after a few months, she left the EMS. As it turned out, Judy used her EMT as she patrolled the forest.

When Judy was at the post office on Christmas Eve Day, she would call mothers to remind them that their children would not be happy if their presents from Santa were still in the post office Christmas morning.

During retirement, Judy spent four months in Alaska and Western Canada, traveling for the first time without a VW camper and like her VW camper, the GMC didn’t fail her. The road went as far north as the Arctic Circle. Her beloved Sadie dog was her companion on this long trip. Judy always had horses, cats and dogs. The dogs were generally good travelers and wonderful company.

Judy was a wonderful friend: patient and thoughtful, with a keen sense of humor.

To remember Judy, she would love for you to take a hike and end it with 2 scoops of ice cream, Judy’s very favorite food! Rest in peace, dear friend. YOU are missed!



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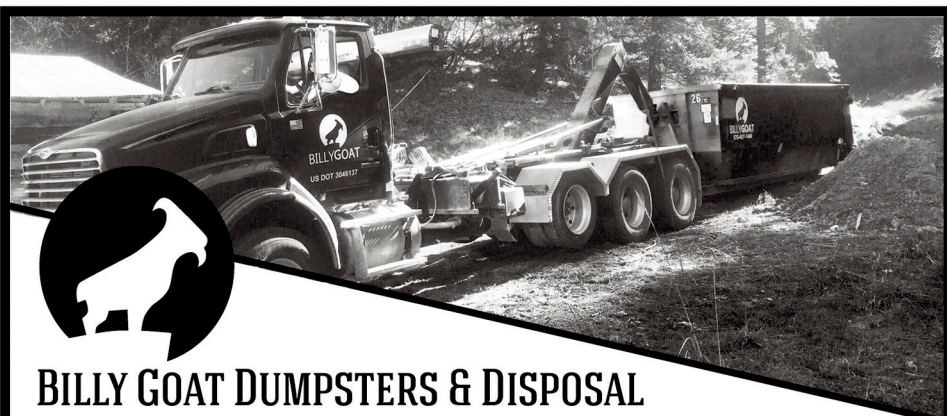
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Faces & Places

Mountain Girl, Ocean Heart: Bryanna Bradshaw Pursues Marine Biology

Cloudcroft’s own Bryanna Bradshaw set out for Florida, where she’s about to enter her junior year at college. This summer, she rescued sea turtles as part of her education. by Hannah Dean



Photos and handling were done under permit #25/26-197 and #26-055, under conditions not detrimental to these animals. Photos were collected during routine exams, treatments, releases, and cleanings.

Growing up on a farm out in Mayhill, **Bryanna Bradshaw** didn’t seem destined for a life spent elbow-deep in sea turtle nests and shark nurseries. But somewhere between 4-H showings and family trips to the Florida coast, something clicked.

“A lot of people were like, you can’t be a mountain girl and do marine biology,” Bradshaw said. “One of the big driving factors is that I want to prove people wrong, that the two sides of the world can coexist.”

Now a rising junior studying marine biology at Eckerd College in St. Petersburg, Florida, Bradshaw has spent her college years chasing that proof. Her new experiences span from sea turtle nesting beaches in Cuba to a rescue and rehabilitation internship at the Gulfarium Care Center on the Florida panhandle.

Natal Homing and Blue Moms

Bradshaw’s first major fieldwork took her to Cuba on a sea turtle nesting research project led by one of her professors, who discovered a phenomenon called natal homing, the tendency of

sea turtles to return to nest at the very beach where they hatched.

“Every year, we go back to see how often turtles come back to the same place,” Bradshaw explained. Her team tagged turtles, measured their growth since the previous season, and counted the eggs in each clutch — anywhere from 100 to 150 eggs at a time.

First-time nesters, or “blue moms,” tend to lay fewer eggs, with clutch sizes growing in later years. One especially devoted returning turtle, on her 10th visit to the beach, laid two nests in a single season.

Even with those numbers, the odds are steep. “One in a thousand sea turtles make it to adulthood,” Bradshaw said. Hatchlings are barely the size of a quarter when they emerge, easy prey for birds on the beach and fish once they reach open water. And that’s before accounting for people. “Humans don’t help,” she said. “That number has been getting worse.”

Boat strikes are a growing danger, Bradshaw said, made worse by fear rather than indifference.

“A lot of people don’t understand that if you hit them and call, then you won’t get in trouble,” she said. “They just see that

sea turtles are protected, and they’re afraid of the fine that comes with harming the sea turtle, so they just kind of leave them for dead.”

Left untreated, a cracked shell traps air that prevents a turtle from diving to feed, exposing it to infection. Because a turtle’s brain sits so close to its skull, a skull fracture is often fatal, Bradshaw notes.

Bradshaw later beams as she shares treasured memories of 10 open-water dives she logged in Cuba, where she also saw a shark nursery and a hawks-bill sea turtle, a critically endangered sea turtle species in the wild.

One Special Turtle

This past summer, Bradshaw got a firsthand look at the recovery side of that story during an internship at the Gulfarium Care Center, the only sea turtle rescue and rehabilitation facility in the Florida panhandle, meaning turtles arrived from as far away as Panama City, Pensacola, and Navarre.

Her first patient came in on her very first day: a turtle named Carlos, hooked internally and externally by a fisherman near Panama City.

“We took all the external [hooks] off

during his intake. We did X-rays and found all the internal hooks,” Bradshaw said. The team fed him cotton balls to cushion the sharp ends of the remaining hooks as they worked their way through his system naturally. “I actually watched him naturally pass all of his hooks, which was so cool,” she said. Carlos cleared his line and hooks within a couple of months, free of any other health issues, and Bradshaw was there for his release.

“He’s my little baby,” she said.

Not every case is as straightforward. Bradshaw described debilitated turtle syndrome, or DTS, a condition where “their organs are shutting down so badly that they’re pulling calcium from their shell, so it becomes soft like your fingernail, and you can puncture their shell.” It’s one of the leading reasons rescued turtles turn up floating or entangled in the first place, she said, their bodies are simply not doing well before they’re ever hooked or struck.

What’s Next: Vet School and the Great Barrier Reef

“I want to be an aquatic vet, so I actually get to do more than just the intake and taking care of them,” Bradshaw said. “I actually get to do the surgeries and the

*This coming
winter term,
where she’s
hoping to dive
the Great Barrier
Reef*

diagnostics on them, and then also still work with a little bit of other animals: dolphins, sea lions, seals, manatees, fish. Kind of everything that’s at an aquarium.”

Eckerd’s curriculum shapes a lot of her path, too. Instead of traditional general education requirements, students complete a set of “perspectives,” including a global perspective and an environmental perspective.

“We don’t have general ed classes, so you don’t have to necessarily do an English, math, science class,” Bradshaw explained. “Really, the only way to get [a global perspective] is to go abroad and see the world.” That’s what’s sending her to Australia this coming winter term, where she’s hoping to dive the Great Barrier Reef.

Cloudcroft Kid

Long before sea turtles, Bradshaw was a fixture of Cloudcroft community life.

She joined CLOC (Cloudcroft Light Opera Company) at age 6 and stayed until she was 19, working her way from the youngest actors’ traditional freckle makeup up through bigger roles, including the Enchantress in

Beauty and the Beast for the Alamogordo Children’s Theatre.

She also spent several years working at the Sacramento Historical Museum and Pioneer Village’s Haunted Village, first as a young “creepy soul keeper” and later as a “scream actor” in the schoolhouse scenes.

That theater background is following her to college.

This fall, Bradshaw is co-directing an Eckerd College theater production of *Lost Girls*, a story following Wendy after her return from Neverland as she tries to find herself in a world where Peter Pan doesn’t exist. It’s set to open in November after Thanksgiving.

She’s directing a cast of 12 “real theater students”, she said, and the project had to be pitched to and approved by the college’s theater board before rehearsals could even begin. She and a close friend are co-directing and designing the show’s costumes themselves, with help from students in Eckerd’s theater production class, building sets and props. “So I’m very excited for that,” Bradshaw said.

Bradshaw was adopted by her grandparents, **Cindi** and **Dave Bradshaw**, at age 7, and she credits that early chapter of her life with much of her drive. As the first in her family, alongside her older sister, to pursue a college degree, she said the goal has always been building a life “beyond paycheck to paycheck.”

And, that life is full: a marine biology degree, a rescue turtle named Carlos somewhere out there in the wild ocean, a play to direct, and a trip to Australia’s Great Barrier Reef on the horizon.



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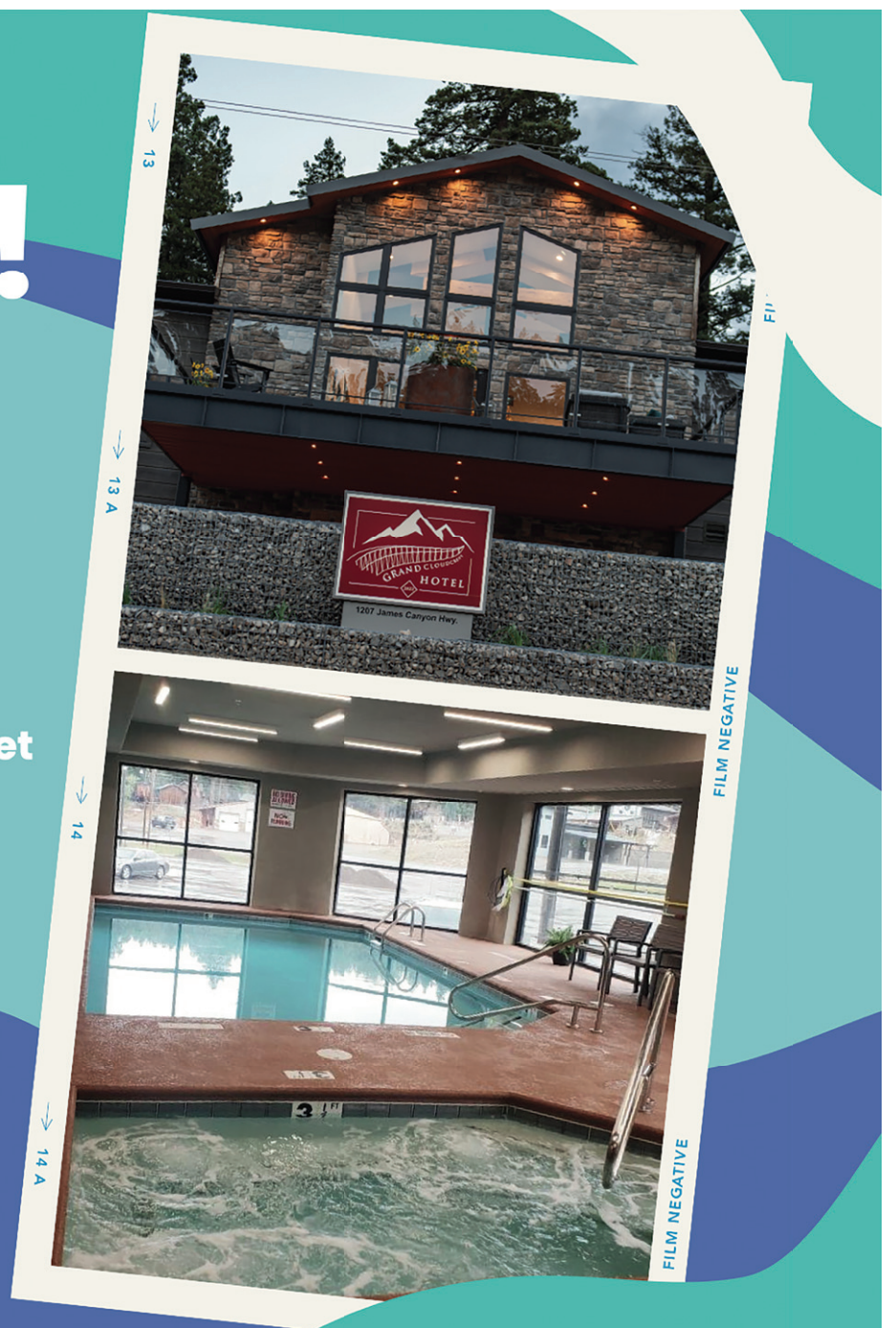
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