



PAJARITO ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER

Trail Map for the Future:



**Community, Connection,
Environmental Education
& Sustainability**



PEEC'S STRATEGIC PLAN

2016-2020

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	4
Introduction.	5
Organizational Values	7
Strategic Plan	8
Cost/Benefit Analysis Form	14



PEEC

Pajarito Environmental
Education Center

Connecting People with Nature Since 2000

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many thanks to all who participated in personal interviews, the 2015 Board retreat and the October 2015 PEECnic to share their impressions, ideas and hopes for PEEC and the Los Alamos Nature Center. Interviewees and participants included current and former Board Directors and members of the former Advisory Board; current and former staff and volunteers; donors; local educators; PEEC program participants; and folks affiliated with PEEC's partners, such as Bandelier and Los Alamos Public Schools. Most are listed by name below, and all are appreciated.

Thank You!

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Robert Gibson, *former Board/Advisory Board member*

Chick Keller, *Founder, former Board member, Herbarium Director, Presenter & Walks Leader*

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Randy Ryti, *former Board member, Neptune & Co.*

Karla Sartor, *Board member, Finance*

Ann Shafer, *Board member, Artist*

Becky Shankland, *Founder, former Board member, Docent, Captial Campaign Chair*

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Kurt Steinhaus, *Los Alamos Public Schools Superintendent*

Hari Viswanathan, *Board member, Photographer*

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Sue Watts, *former Board member, Interpretive Plan Chair, Gentle Walks Leader*

Bob Walker, *Board member, Wildlife Observation Area, Photographer*

Leslie Wallstrom, *Member, Donor*

Katherine Watson, *Executive Director*

Sandra West, *Marketing Manager*

Mary Carol Williams, *former Board member, Landscaping, Artist*

Dave Yeamans, *former Board member, Birding Group*

INTRODUCTION

We are pleased to share with you the 2016-2020 Strategic Plan for the Pajarito Environmental Education Center. PEEC's 15-year goal of operating a modern nature center in Los Alamos, New Mexico was finally met; the doors opened on April 22, 2015. Strategic planning discussions took place between May 2015 and January 2016, when the Plan was adopted by the Board. The Plan is being printed as we approach the Nature Center's one-year anniversary in an extraordinarily successful public-private partnership with the County of Los Alamos.

Much of the work to set out PEEC's mission, vision, values, goals and strategies was done or begun by Sue Watts and the Interpretive Team as part of the work necessary to design the indoor and outdoor exhibits at the new Nature Center. We are now looking further into the future and building on that groundwork as well as on PEEC's long history of excellence in providing environmental education and direct outdoor experience.

The Plan includes four major goals, objectives for each goal, action steps for each objective and a timeline for each action step. PEEC's current contractual responsibilities to the County of Los Alamos and to the Los Alamos Department of Public Utilities appear first. New objectives are listed subsequently under each goal.

The Board's adoption of the Plan included a decision to require the completion of a cost/benefit analysis to assist in the evaluation of all new efforts without an obvious source of funding. The cost/benefit analysis form is included following the goals.

The complete Strategic Plan is a working document. It includes identified champions among Board, staff and volunteers, and notes on progress for each action step submitted quarterly to the Board by the Executive Director as a Dashboard Report. The current Dashboard Report is available for review by contacting the Executive Director (director@peecnature.org). Beyond quarterly monitoring of progress, the Board will review the Plan's objectives and action steps each year, and make appropriate adjustments based on available funding and opportunities.

Those providing input for this Plan spoke with passion about the many ways in which PEEC has enriched their lives and the lives of others by connecting them to the natural environment of the Pajarito Plateau. We will continue to make those connections while responding to additional opportunities in the community, engaging more diverse audiences, and assuring a sustainable organization.

We look forward to sharing and celebrating our progress over the next four years.

Felicia Orth, President
March 2016



PEEC Board of Directors

Felicia Orth *President*
Bob Walker *Vice-President*
Nancy Arendt *Treasurer*
Daniel Poretti *Secretary*
Michele Altherr
Jeremy Campbell

Talia Dreicer
Becky Oertel
Karla Sartor
Ann Shafer
Hari Viswanathan

PEEC Staff

Katherine Watson *Executive Director*
Jonathan Creel *Director of Interpretation*
Siobhan Niklasson *Education Programs Director*
Beth Cortright *Nature Center Manager*

Kate Barrere *Visitor Services Manager*
Sandra West *Marketing Manager*
Denise Matthews *Educator*



ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES

PEEC connects people of all ages with nature from its location in Los Alamos, New Mexico, perched on the sloping shelf of the Pajarito Plateau halfway between the rift sheltering the Rio Grande and the eroded volcanic peaks of the Jemez Mountains.

Mission

Enriching people's lives by strengthening their connections to our canyons, mesas, mountains, and skies.

Vision

Los Alamos is a place where people enjoy, value, and care for nature.

Core Principles

Nature: There is no substitute for direct experiences in nature, experiences that lay the foundation for future environmental actions and care.

Education: Education provided within a scientific context plays a central role in our interactions with the community.

Community: From nature, we learn that a community is a place that answers the needs of its members. People need a place where they can come together to learn about and to celebrate the importance of nature in their lives.

Partners

Los Alamos County, Los Alamos Public Schools, Los Alamos Department of Public Utilities, Los Alamos National Laboratory, Bandelier National Monument, Valles Caldera National Preserve, UNM-LA, Mesa Public Library, Bradbury Science Museum, Los Alamos Mountaineers, Los Alamos Sustainable Energy Network, Pajarito Astronomers, Los Alamos Co-op Market, Pajarito Mountain, the Reel Deal movie theater, Fuller Lodge Art Center, Los Alamos Historical Society, the YMCA, New Mexico Wildlife Center, and many others.



STRATEGIC GOALS

- 1. COMMUNITY**—Be responsive to opportunities and the desires of the community of Los Alamos.
- 2. ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION**—Engage diverse audiences through high-quality nature education and direct experiences to foster awareness, knowledge, skills and stewardship.
- 3. CONNECTION**—Connect people to each other through PEEC.
- 4. SUSTAINABILITY**—Ensure that PEEC is a financially secure, smoothly functioning organization.

GOAL	OBJECTIVES	ACTION STEPS	TIMELINE
1.0 COMMUNITY Be responsive to opportunities and desires of community	1.1 Increase visitation to the Los Alamos area. (County Contract)	1.1.1 Expand marketing beyond region. 1.1.2 Consider longer operating hours. 1.1.3 Consider multi-day programs and celebrity speakers. 1.1.4 Consider concept of being outdoor “adventure facilitation center,” including lending equipment.	Dec -16 Jan - 17 Jun - 17 Jun - 17
	1.2 Raise awareness of resources by working with local organizations to develop partnerships, collaborations, and special programs to serve community needs. (County Contract)	1.2.1 Maintain quality collaborations. 1.2.2 Establish new partners to help meet mission, generate resources, expand visibility, add value to the community.	Ongoing Jun - 18
	1.3 Assist and advise County staff on beautification for public lands and other areas, e.g., through native plantings. (County Contract)	1.3.1 Continue service as requested.	Ongoing
	1.4 Provide point of contact for community questions about plants, animals, local nature and household environmental issues. (County Contract)	1.4.1 Continue service as point of contact and resource.	Ongoing
	1.5 Develop plan to connect Manhattan Project National Park visitors to nature and the Nature Center.	1.5.1 Pursue representation on planning committee or subcommittee. 1.5.2 Consider offering hikes or other programs on how Manhattan Project people interacted with the landscape.	Ongoing Unknown
	1.6 Participate in Creative District activities.	1.6.1 Continue Fourth Friday activities with, e.g., Fractal shows. 1.6.2 Consider special activities during large events. 1.6.3 Continue to be involved with and responsive to Creative District coffee klatch. 1.6.4 Seek identification on District map.	Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing
	1.7 Advocate for a community-wide TrailFest, NatureFest, an event such as “The Big Hike” or “Los Alamos Goes Outside.”	1.7.1 Explore resources available and the level of support at County, in community and at Chamber for new festival or for expansion of Earth Day, with possible bio-blitz or additional hiking events.	Apr - 17




GOAL	OBJECTIVES	ACTION STEPS	TIMELINE
2.0 ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION Engage diverse audiences through high-quality nature education and direct experience to foster awareness, knowledge, skills and stewardship	2.1 Provide environmental programs and services, e.g., youth volunteer days, nature camps, nature exploration workshops, family nature walks, scavenger hunts, outreach programs for public schools and home-schoolers, multi-generational activities, youth community garden, and scout badge requirements. (County Contract)	2.1.1 Continue programs and services. 2.1.2 Consider more guided excursions, birding trips, live outdoor observation of the stars, and more programs on climate change, the Rio Grande, pollinators and nature photography.	Ongoing Ongoing
	2.2 Offer programs for LAPS youth, incl. field trips, free planetarium shows, lessons in school classrooms and programs at the Nature Center. (County Contract)	2.2.1 Continue programs with required emphasis on hands-on experiences and meeting state/national STEM learning standards. 2.2.2 Offer different ways for children to succeed.	Ongoing Jun - 18
	2.3 Coordinate teams of volunteers and/or interpreters of the rich natural environment of LA County. (County Contract)	2.3.1 Continue coordination. 2.3.2 Create Passport to the Pajarito program. 2.3.3 Consider reaching out to experts for more photos to help with identification of local species.	Ongoing Jan - 17 Jan - 17
	2.4 Maintain environmental educational displays. (County Contract)	2.4.1 Complete outdoor exhibits/landscaping; add interpretive signs. 2.4.2 Continue animal and outdoor exhibit adoption program. 2.4.3 Consider livestream from bird's nest, changing exhibits, invitations to bring things in, a display about the snag, becoming a hummingbird watch center, digitizing Herbarium.	Dec - 16 Ongoing Jan - 18
	2.5 Offer assistance to teachers wanting to utilize or develop specific science and/or nature-related projects, programs or curricula. (County Contract)	2.5.1 Continue assistance. 2.5.2 Consider further professional development for teachers on science topics.	Ongoing Jun - 17
	2.6 Provide lessons and activities to elementary and secondary LAPS students on energy and water conservation. (DPU Contract)	2.6.1 Continue trunk lessons. 2.6.2 Consider expanding curricula and teacher resources.	Ongoing Dec - 16
	2.7 Participate in organizing community events on energy and water conservation. (DPU Contract)	2.7.1 Continue supporting events.	Ongoing
	2.8 Continue providing assistance and awards for LAPS Science Fair.	2.8.1 Continue assistance and awards.	Ongoing





GOAL	OBJECTIVES	ACTION STEPS	TIMELINE
2.0 ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION (CONTINUED) Engage diverse audiences through high-quality nature education and direct experience to foster awareness, knowledge, skills and stewardship	2.9 Expand programs and outreach to underserved youth in the Valley and the Pueblos.	2.9.1 Increase field trips to Center, and pursue funding for transport. 2.9.2 Increase presence in summer camps, and pursue funding for transport. 2.9.3 Consider expanding field science lessons to their classrooms.	Jun - 17 Jun - 18 Jun - 18
	2.10 Expand programs and outreach to those aged 13-30, especially those age 13-18 during the school year and those age 19-30 during the summer.	2.10.1 Increase intern opportunities for planetarium and other programs (13-18 years old). 2.10.2 Explore options with MAPS (Mentorship, Apprenticeship, Partnership) counselor at Los Alamos High School. 2.10.3 Offer entertaining shows (e.g., lasers) and social events (trivia night, game night) at Center. 2.10.4 Offer programs on technology outdoors (e.g., Go-Pros and drones) and exciting trips attractive to, e.g., Lab interns during the summer; connect with Lab intern liaison. 2.10.5 Convene council of teens to offer ideas; participate in Senior Appreciation Night; consider day-long or week-long service projects	Sep - 16 Sep - 16 Sep - 16 Jun - 16 May - 16
	2.11 Expand the use of the Trails App and the Nature Guides.	2.11.1 Work with Valles Caldera, Bandelier, Los Alamos National Laboratory and County to increase number of trails on Trails App. 2.11.2 Work with experts to develop additional Nature Guides.	Dec - 17 Dec - 18
	2.12 Partner with other organizations to facilitate participation in citizen science projects and stewardship projects.	2.12.1 Explore projects available, and consider programming or tools necessary to facilitate participation.	Jan - 17
	2.13 Explore the expansion of the summer camps.	2.13.1 Research the market for adult, university student and family outdoor camp and field camp experiences, and prepare a cost/benefit analysis for PEEC.	Sep - 16
	2.14 Be a model of sustainability and environmental stewardship.	2.14.1 Install solar panels. 2.14.2 Maintain water-wise gardens. 2.14.3 Document/interpret LEED aspects of Nature Center building under DPU contract. 2.14.4 Encourage wildlife habitat designation for community.	Jan - 16 Ongoing Dec - 16 Jan - 16



GOAL	OBJECTIVES	ACTION STEPS	TIMELINE
3.0 CONNECTION Connect people to each other through PEEC 	3.1 Continue hosting birthday parties and special rentals such as weddings.	3.1.1 Expand special program packages, such as spider party or star party. 3.1.2 Promote special rentals.	Jan - 17 Ongoing
	3.2 Continue relationships and explore deeper connections with other local groups.	3.2.1 Discuss regular meeting building rentals with Mountaineers, Geology group, Sierra Club, etc. 3.2.2 Pursue opportunities to make/invite presentations to local groups such as Oppenheimer, League of Women Voters, Montessori	Jun - 16 Dec - 16
	3.3 Continue supporting the online special interest groups.	3.3.1 Consider additional groups for, e.g., special solar events. 3.3.2 Host social events for participants. 3.3.3 Explore App i-naturalist, for review of observations by experts.	Jun - 17 Jun - 17 Jun - 17
	3.4 Continue and increase the programs encouraging people to connect with one another.	3.4.1 Continue nature playtimes, summer family evenings, gentle walks. 3.4.2 Consider moonrise parties and small group camping with whole families. 3.4.3 Consider bringing together diverse populations around nature. 3.4.4 Consider forming nature club for grownups as informal discussion group without prepared talks. 3.4.5 Establish mentoring program to connect experts with interested students in primary, secondary and post-secondary schools.	Ongoing Mar - 17 Mar - 17 Mar - 17 Sep - 17
	3.5 Schedule more social events among staff, Board members, volunteers, docents and donors.	3.5.1 Host Thanksgiving social and other donor events. 3.5.2 Schedule occasional Docent and volunteer teas. 3.5.3 Create mugbook, volunteer newsgam.	Ongoing Ongoing Jun - 16
	3.6 Expand gift shop to carry more locally and regionally made items.	3.6.1 Reach out to local and regional artists and authors for hand-crafted items related to nature.	Ongoing



GOAL	OBJECTIVES	ACTION STEPS	TIMELINE
4.0 SUSTAINABILITY Ensure that PEEC is a financially secure, smoothly functioning organization.  	4.1 Apply for grants and manage resources related to environmental education/preservation. (County Contract)	4.1.1 Continue to prepare and submit grant applications.	Ongoing
	4.2 Review and update PEEC policies, procedures and manuals, and promote familiarity with applicable guidance.	4.2.1 Collect updated guidance and forms into one place for employees and one place for volunteers. 4.2.2 Provide annual training or refresher on complex or sensitive issues.	Jun - 16 Jun - 16
	4.3 Promote positive work environment, fair compensation and benefits for staff, including resources for professional development.	4.3.1 Implement new benefits policy. 4.3.2 Identify necessary development tools or resources.	Ongoing Ongoing
	4.4 Provide up to date education and information for docents on indoor and outdoor exhibits.	4.4.1 Set up schedule of orientation and refresher training. 4.4.2 Continue providing docents with up-to-date information. 4.4.3 Consider master naturalist program	Jun - 16 Jun - 16 Jun - 17
	4.5 Provide comprehensive volunteer management and support.	4.5.1 Formalize volunteer management structure, duties and communication channels, including updated handbook. 4.5.2 Identify and provide support needed for operational volunteers.	Jun - 16 Jun - 16
	4.6 Foster a culture of planning, and assure that plans are kept current. Add a dashboard for reporting to tie activities to the current plans.	4.6.1 Review the Interpretive Plan. 4.6.2 Create a resource development plan, to include funding tools. 4.6.3 Create a communications plan. 4.6.4 Create exhibit plan. 4.6.5 Consider a business plan, and revisit sufficiency of program fees.	Apr - 17 Sep - 17 Jun - 16 Apr - 17 Apr - 17
	4.7 Increase PEEC membership to 600 and lifetime members to 25.	4.7.1 Conduct membership drive. 4.7.2 Act to convert program attendees to members.	Ongoing Ongoing
	4.8 Collect, evaluate and act on visitor experience data.	4.8.1 Review data collection for programs and visitors. 4.8.2 Research exhibit engagement and evaluation system.	Apr - 17 Apr - 17



PEEC Cost/Benefit Analysis

Proposed Initiative:

Description of planned new activity:

Criteria	Yes	No	Comments
1. Directly supports PEEC's mission: Enriching people's lives by strengthening their connection to our canyons, mesas, mountains and skies.			How does it support the mission?
2. Leader identified to lead this initiative			Who? Time commitment?
3. Meets organizations strategic goals			Which goals will be met and how?
4. Has measurable objectives			What are they?
5. Requires partners and/or collaborators			Who?
6. Project obligations and expectations			What are they?
7. Commits PEEC's financial or other resources			How much and in what way? Please provide budget:
8. Commits additional PEEC staff or volunteer resources			Who, how much and in what way?
9. Involves legal risk			If yes, explain:
10. Project Timeline			Provide timeline:
11. Similar activities attempted previously			If yes, what, when and by whom?

Additional comments:

Rationale:

Potential Audience:

Summary – Overall estimated impact on the organization:

Submitted by: _____ Date: _____

Los Alamos organizers plan Earth Day celebration

By JOHN MARBLE
Monitor Staff Writer

Activities scheduled for Earth Day 2000 in Los Alamos Saturday include hunting for plants at Deer Trap Mesa, a guided geology tour through the upper Pueblo and Walnut Canyons, and looking and listening for songbirds along the edge of the La Mesa burn.

The Los Alamos Friends of the Nature Center are organizing the 30th annual Earth Day celebration this year, and their objective is to highlight the natural environment of Los Alamos County and also bring environmental issues to the public's attention.

"We have scheduled various outings and exhibits that will give residents a chance to learn about the natural area in which they live," said Michael Smith, a member of the Friends of the Nature Center and conservation chairman of the Pajarito Group of the Sierra Club. "We also will have qualified people providing information on environmental issues facing Los Alamos and the world in general."

Smith said people tend to focus on environmental issues that affect them directly. He said there are also extremely important issues that may exist outside a person's normal

River right now. Our activities are also designed to help people become aware of some of these issues."

"We hope this year's Earth Day Celebration will provide a model for the types of activities a nature center could provide for Los Alamos," said Becky Shankland, a member of the steering committee for the Friends of the Nature Center. "A nature center could help promote these activities throughout the year."

Shankland said she was excited about the fact that the steering committee of the Friends of the Nature Center was made up from people representing many diverse organizations in Los Alamos. She said the scheduled events for this year's Earth Day celebration represented different interests and also provided activities for all age groups.

Throughout the day, the Friends of the Nature Center will have an information booth at the YMCA Annex in Central Park Square. Flyers describing Earth Day activities will be available, and children will be able to participate in an Earth Day art project. Information will be available on how to become a Friend of the Nature Center.

Craig Martin of the Los Alamos



SHAUN HUDSON/Monitor

Sally King, a ranger at Bandelier National Monument, stands in front of an area that is part of the watershed restoration

project. Rangers will be providing a guided tour of this area on Earth Day, which is Saturday, April 22.

ENVIRONMENT

PEEC expands programs

By TOM JERVIS
For the Monitor

The Pajarito Environmental Education Center (PEEC) has substantially expanded its education programs for 2002.

Increased funding from the Los Alamos National Laboratory Foundation will enable PEEC to offer an expanded program of field science studies to schools in the Jemez Mountains region next year. Offered in partnership with the education staff at Audubon-New Mexico's Randall Davey Audubon Center, the programs focus on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats.

A grant of \$10,000 from the LANL Foundation will enable PEEC to expand the reach and the scope of its educational outreach programs. Part of PEEC's mission is to involve young people in inquiry-based educational activities focused on the environment. Current opportunities for this kind of enriching activity are not evenly distributed in the communities that make up the Jemez region, and are particularly lacking in rural communities. The excitement that has been

shown in communities where initial programs have been presented supports this assessment.

The "Birds with a Purpose" program will be continued by reaching more schools. During 2001 the combined classroom and field program was presented in collaboration with the Bradbury Science Museum in Los Alamos, as well as in the Jemez Valley schools, and at San Ildefonso and Santa Clara pueblos. Initial funding for this program was provided by a challenge grant from the LANL Foundation last May. Designed to be a structured learning experience, Birds with a Purpose educates children about the diversity of birds and habitats found in their own backyards and schoolyards, showing the importance of protecting these habitats. The curriculum has been successfully presented in many communities around New Mexico.

In addition to Birds for a Purpose, in 2002 PEEC will offer a four-day Field Studies Program to four classrooms in

Please see PEEC, 2



VULTURES

The birds of prey have been taking their toll on the desert landscape. In the past, vultures were common in the area, but their numbers have declined significantly. This is due to a variety of factors, including habitat loss and the use of pesticides. Vultures are important scavengers, and their decline can have a significant impact on the ecosystem.

Conservation efforts are being made to protect vultures and their habitats. This includes creating artificial nesting sites and protecting areas where they feed. It is important to continue these efforts to ensure the survival of these magnificent birds.



Barbara Caley and dark-eyed junco

Utilities hosts WattSwap at PEEC

SPECIAL TO THE MONITOR

Los Alamos Dept. of Public Utilities next WattSwap will occur at the Pajarito Environmental Education Center at 2500 Orange St. on Saturday during the Backyard Wildlife Habitat Tour.

The 3-2-1 bulb exchange program allows county residents and organizations to swap up to six traditional incandescent bulbs for six energy-efficient compact fluorescent bulbs in a 3-2-1 priority.

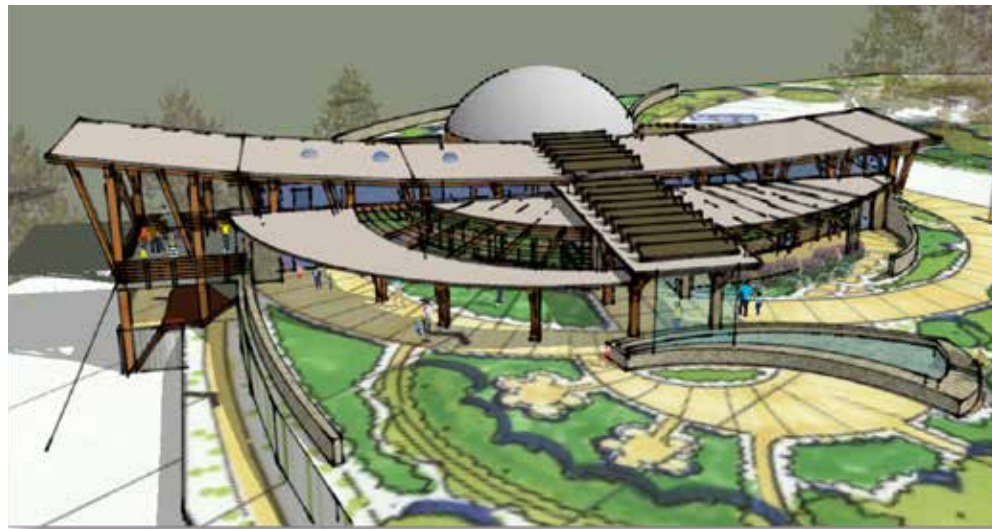
• First 300 swap incandescent bulbs for three 25-watt CFLs.
• Next 75 swap incandescent for two 25-watt CFLs.
• Last 500 swap for a 15-watt CFL.

The PEEC-administered kickoff began last month at the "Save Big Idea" festival. Local residents swapped more than 1,000 lightbulbs for Energy Star-rated compact fluorescent bulbs provided by the Dept. of Public Utilities.

The DPU provides tools and techniques to reduce energy consumption through their Energy and Water Conservation Program, led by Conservation Officer Matt Dickson.

In July 2000 the Utilities Board adopted a motion "to provide for sustainable energy and water resources utilizing changing supply options and community usage" which includes a directive for the DPU to promote conservation.

For more information on the DPU's WattSwap, visit www.pajaritoenergy.org/wattswap, visit www.wattswap.org, or email WattSwap@pajaritoenergy.com. Another WattSwap is planned for the winter break area with the date still to be determined. Ongoing lightbulb exchanges are accepted during business hours at PEEC's Nature Center at 2500 Orange St. (252-6440) and at the El Comodoro Care Center at the DPU, 801 Trinity, 2nd Floor.



BULBS The new bulb the county is going green.



Photographers

Emily Blumenthal, Beth Cortright, Chick Keller, Yvonne Keller, Josip Loncaric, Jennifer Macke, Felicia Orth, Stephen Shankland, Bob Walker, and Mouser Williams.



PEEC

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