

GARDENING WITH THE MASTERS

An Ongoing Lecture Series
Sponsored by the Sandoval County Master Gardeners
Admission is FREE and all are invited to attend

TOPIC

BACKYARD COMPOSTING

**Learn the basics of creating your own
 compost**

INSTRUCTOR

Patricia Barger

Sandoval County Veteran Master Gardener

DATE: Tuesday, June 1, 2010
TIME: 7:00 PM to 8:30 PM
PLACE: Meadowlark Senior Center
 4330 Meadowlark Lane, S.E. –
 Rio Rancho

Don't miss this educational opportunity to learn from local experts about gardening in New Mexico.

For More Information, Call

Sandoval County Cooperative Extension Office, 867-2582



If you are an individual with a disability who is in need of an auxiliary aid or service to participate in the meeting, please contact Rudy Benavidez (867-2582) by Friday May 28, 2010.

NMSU Sandoval County Cooperative Extension Service, P. O. Box 400, Bernalillo, New Mexico, 87004 (505) 867-2582

New Mexico State University is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer and educator. NMSU and the U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Cowbelles Beef Cookoff
 see pg 11 for details

Cuba Community Garden
SPRING PLANTING PREPARATION
 May 22, 9am - Noon

RURAL BOOKMOBILE SCHEDULE

Tuesday June 8

TORREON CHAPTER HOUSE 12:30-2:30

REGINA STORE 3:30-4:30

Wednesday June 9

LINDRITH POST OFFICE 9:00-10:00

GALLINA POST OFFICE 10:30-11:15

GALLINA COYOTE RANGER DISTRICT OFFICE 11:30-12:15

Cuba High School Graduation

May 21, 2010

Last Day of School

May 28, 2010

Summer School

June 7 - June 30

PHONE NUMBERS TO HAVE BY YOUR PHONE

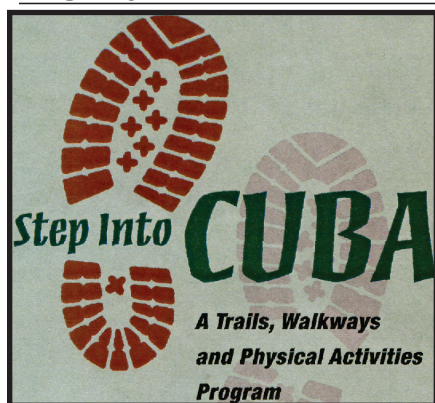
For Emergencies: 911
For Non-Emergencies
(dispatch): 1-800-898-2876
Cuba Police Department: 289-9157
Sandoval County Sub-Station: 289-3007
New Mexico State Police Sub-Station: 289-3605
NMSP District 5 Albuquerque (dispatch State Police Cuba): 841-9256



Healthy Communities
www.stepintocuba.org

May 2010 Group Walks Calendar

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
10:00 AM	Weekday Adventure WALK 60 minutes		Weekday Adventure WALK 60 minutes		Weekday Adventure WALK 60 minutes
12:00 PM		PMS/Credit Union WALK 15 - 30 minutes		PMS/Credit Union WALK 15 - 30 minutes	
01:00 PM		Senior Center WALK	Senior Center WALK	Senior Center WALK	Senior Center WALK
02:00 PM		St. Francis Park WALK 20 - 60	St. Francis Park WALK	St. Francis Park WALK	St. Francis Park WALK 20 - 60 minutes
04:00 PM	Cuba Schools WALK 30 - 60		Cuba Schools WALK 30 - 60		Cuba Schools WALK 30 - 60 minutes
05:00 PM		Library Trail WALK 30 - 60 minutes		Library Trail WALK 30 - 60 minutes	



St. Francis Park a Hub of Activity

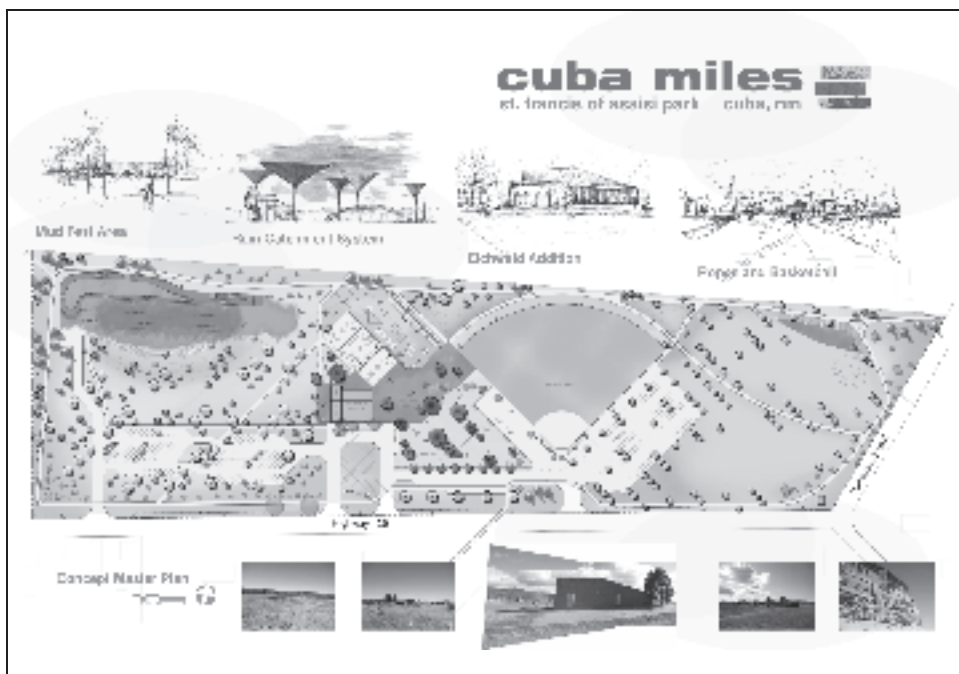
Parks in small rural communities play a much different role than parks in urban centers. Historically, public parks have been seen as necessary refuge from the city. But, what role does a public park play in a 21st century rural community immediately surrounded by natural elements such as mountains, foothills, plains and canyons? Such unrestricted access

to nature certainly depletes the purpose of creating a pastoral space within the limits of a small village. What if the role of the park in small rural populations was modified to incorporate actively programmed elements into its design instead of open space? Rural parks could be programmed and designed to support organized activities – leaving, but connected to, the surrounding undeveloped landscape to provide for escape or retreat.

The Society of Landscape Architecture Students (SOCLAS) was invited to help the Step into Cuba Alliance and National Park Service to develop a conceptual master plan for the Village of Cuba's St. Francis Park. On December 3rd, 2009 SOCLAS visited Cuba, NM to interview with several alliance members, high school students and the Village Council. Then, on January 30th, 2010 SOCLAS held a workshop in Cuba at the Eichwald Center at St. Francis Park.

Hub for Activity

St. Francis of Assisi Park has been identified by community members as a hub for activity as it is ideally located between Cuba schools and downtown and is close to resident's homes. In order to design the park as a hub for activity it was important



to understand the surrounding areas and populations that Cuba serves. St. Francis Park should become a place where the community, or people who use the park, feel a sense of ownership over it. Having a sense of ownership would ideally lead to continued maintenance, protection and appreciation for the park. Through the involvement of the community in the development of the park, volunteers can gain a sense of ownership. Through volunteer labor and design, St. Francis of Assisi Park can be built with limited funds and become stitched into the physical and social fabric of the Village.

Sense of Ownership

A kernel of public ownership already exists in St. Francis Park through volunteers who water the trees and seedlings. Many families come to the park for the playground and walking groups tend to the makeshift trails in order to keep up their walking routines. If village members can keep up this integrity and volunteerism, St. Francis Park has a lot of opportunity to develop into a park that is built specifically for those that use it. The opportunity extends into a park that will also be maintained and appreciated into the future.

Cuba Mud Fest

The mud bogging pit at St. Francis Park will be the first design item discussed. A two-day summer mud bogging event brings in 6,000 people to the Village of Cuba each summer to race and cheer which leads to full hotels and busy restaurants. On the other hand, a space that is only used two days out of the year can be a waste of

The Step Into Cuba Walking Program is now enrolling for the 2010 Season!

Spring is here, and its time to get back outside and get moving! As many of you know, walking is one of the easiest, safest, most inexpensive, and most enjoyable forms of exercise. Even if you have health challenges, or have never been physically active, you can develop the habit of walking for your health. Ask your provider at the PMS Health Center for a Walking Prescription, and a referral to the Step Into Cuba Walking Champion.

ANY increase in the amount of walking you do will:

- tone muscles;
- reduce stress;
- improve sleep;
- increase energy;
- help manage weight;
- improve brain function;
- slow the aging process;
- strengthen bones and joints;
- improve emotional well being; and
- reduce the risk of heart diseases, diabetes, and other illnesses.

Sign up for our 6 Week Walking Plan. Choose your level, track your progress, earn rewards!

- Easy: 30 min/week
- Breezy: 60 min/week
- Brisk: 90 minutes/week
- Lifestyle: 120 minutes/week
- Challenge: 150 minutes/week

This FREE program can help you reach your fitness goals!

We will help you choose the level that's right for you; work with you to find time for walking in your schedule; show you where you can walk in the area; connect you with other walkers.

Walking with others helps you stay motivated and on track!

Walking groups are forming now! Invite a friend, family member or co-worker to sign up with you. We can also help you start a walking group in your neighborhood, church, school, seniors' center, chapter house or work place.

Healthy workers are better workers!

Employers! We can help you start a Worksite Wellness program. Find out how this can benefit your business and your employees.

Call (575)289-3718 and ask about the Step Into Cuba Walking Program!

Or email walkingchampion@stepintocuba.org

Check out our website at www.stepintocuba.org

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to Esther Cordova May, who was presented with a Certificate of Accomplishment and gift rewards for completing one year with the Step Into Cuba Walking Program.

Esther May began walking with the Step Into Cuba Walking Program on May 15, 2009, and has been walking consistently 50 minutes, 3 days a week ever since. Not even the cold winter snow, nor the wicked spring wind could stop her from her walks.



"I can really feel the difference since I started walking" Esther says. "I am stronger and more fit. And being out in nature helps me relieve stress. I always come back from my walks refreshed and ready to take on my day. If I can do this at 73 years old, anyone can!"

Step Into Cuba would also like to congratulate Miriam Rodriguez at the Cuba Credit Union, for being the first walker to earn a reward for completing 6 weeks of consistent walking since the start of the 2010 walking season! Miriam walks after work with a friend on the Library Trail.

If you are ready to turn in your 6 week tracking sheet for the Step Into Cuba Walking Program, just drop it off at 6362 Highway 550 (the WIC office next door to the Post Office) or mail to: Walking Champion, PO Box 880, Cuba, NM 87013. Your reward incentive will be delivered to you.

Come out to St. Francis Park and plant a tree!

Friday, June 11, afternoon

Saturday, June 12, morning & afternoon

Let us know when you can help!

call Jeanette at 575-289-3718

Everyone welcome: School groups, church groups,
business, families, individuals.



Be part of the legacy!

A tree planted today will be of benefit for years to come! Trees can sustain the environment, reduce pollution, increase property value, beautify the area, give shade, and enhance quality of life for all of us.

**To exist as a nation, to prosper as a state,
and to live as a people, we must have trees”
-Theodore Roosevelt**

**Brought to you by Nacimiento Medical Foundation,
Step Into Cuba, with funding provided by a grant from
the New Mexico Forestry Re-leafing Program, and supported
by Cuba Soil and Water Conservation District
and the Village of Cuba**

St. Francis Park *continued from page 18*

valuable public land and seem like a detrimental element to an otherwise beautiful park. Further research into muddin' and other mud pit events led to the decision to keep the pit in St. Francis Park and use it to promote an event referred to herein as "Cuba Mud Fest". Cuba Mud Fest is proposed as a week long event hosting main activities such as mud volleyball, mud wrestling, mud bogging, knee deep tug of war, mud sculpture competitions, pottery, painting, mud art, mud hut building, biking, and seed bombing.

Multiple event festivals lead to diverse participants which would make the mud pit more popular. The pit could be used for other things throughout the year as well. For instance, mud sculptures created during the summer could be left to harden and remain into the winter allowing snow to gather on their forms to create much needed winter interest in the park. Or, mud huts could act as shelters in the cold and return to being mud in the summer for other events. This proposal combines the mud pit with a pump track for bmx which is maintained by the users to create new challenging dirt jumps and turns. This connection allows the mud pit to be used as part of the bike track when it is not functioning as a muddin' pit. Extra space is designed onto the ends of the pit to allow for towing or winching out of the pits. This design also features a large berm on the south side with seating walls for fans which can be used for both mud fest events and BMX races or other events throughout the year. This berm also acts as screening for the area in relation to the garden and other areas in the park. In the middle of the two combined tracks interchangeable art panels are proposed to catch mud as it flies from the tires of both users. These panels made from material ranging from wire mesh to painted canvas, can be removed and installed in other areas of the village or left at the park as a work of mud art. A spray-down station is located near the parking lot to rinse off mud before leaving the park and completes the mud sports area of the design.

Cuba Resident is New UNM Community Project Coordinator

Shari Smoker, a Cuba area resident, has recently been hired by the University of New Mexico Prevention Research Center (PRC) to serve as the Community Project Coordinator for two projects UNM is working on with residents of Cuba: (1) Village Interventions and Venues for Activity (VIVA)-Step Into Cuba -- a project to assist the Step Into Cuba Alliance to examine the success of its efforts to increase physical activity in Cuba and (2) a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Healthy Kids Healthy Communities initiative to increase access to fresh, healthy foods and safe places to walk and play for children and their families in Cuba and the surrounding area.



**Shari Smoker
Community Project
Coordinator**

In September of 2008, the Step Into Cuba Alliance asked the UNM PRC to assist with its efforts to make Cuba more walkable and to promote walking in the Village. It also asked the University to work together with community members and other partners to examine the success of the Alliance's efforts and to document the lessons learned so that other rural communities interested in promoting physical activity can benefit from Cuba's experience. The Step Into Cuba Alliance and the PRC have been working on VIVA-Step Into Cuba ever since. Also, throughout the spring, summer and fall of 2009 Step Into Cuba Alliance members and the PRC worked together to write and apply for a Healthy Kids Healthy Communities grant. In December 2009 the University learned that it has received the grant and PRC staff have been working with community members on the grant activities including the development of a Farmers' Market, expansion of the Cuba community garden and efforts to promote pedestrian safety along U.S. 550. Upon hiring Shari, Sally Davis, UNM PRC Director remarked: "Shari is a great asset to our team. Having her located in an office in Cuba on a daily basis is a great help to us. We are eager for all our partners to meet her and become acquainted with all the knowledge and experience she brings to the job – as well as her enthusiasm." Shari expressed her enthusiasm in this way: "I am excited to be part of such an important initiative and am eager to get to work. The community has been very receptive and I am confident that the efforts to implement and expand the programs will be successful and will benefit the community greatly."

Shari has over 16 years of experience in the areas of human resources, financial management, business development, marketing, and proposal development. She has worked in the both the public and private sectors, with many years spent at the NM Department of Transportation. She also worked at the NM Department of Health in health communication. Shari earned a B.A. in Communications/Moving Image Arts. She resides in the Cuba area with her husband and finds it to be a peaceful place where she can enjoy the wildlife and beautiful scenery. Shari spends her free time hiking with her husband and their two dogs, working in the yard, and visiting with (and spoiling) her one-year old grand-daughter.

Field Sports

The field sports area proposed on the east side of the park includes the very popular baseball diamond and an open space to the east for other activities such as soccer, football, frisbee, kite flying, etc. The open space serves several other purposes including overflow capacity for events, ground picnic space, shade to lie in and a place to watch fireworks. Other unexpected uses may take place in the field areas as well. In fact, the areas are loosely designed to encourage a diverse utilization.

Entertainment Space

The entertainment area just north of the open field space is designed to be open to performance and group activity such as outdoor classes and workshops, concerts and plays, weddings and receptions, as well as meeting space. The amphitheater steps also act as a resting place for walkers on the one-mile loop trail around the park. This area is ideal for entertainment as it has an elevated backdrop to the east along Vallecitos Road and fits into a unique corner of the park away from other intense uses. The entertainment space is designed with seating spaces in the form of a mini amphitheater and is lined with trees in rows that not only frame the space but allow it to be divided up for multiple events or separate outdoor rooms. The trees running through the space also offer shade and relief to an otherwise hot and flat area of the park.

Rest Stops

The Information and seating areas located throughout the site use benches and walls to give walkers a rest at points located at either quieter spaces or places to view other activities going on in the park. Since many of the walking groups and

St. Francis Park *continued from page 19*

people using the trail system are either obese or elderly it is very important to offer these seating opportunities. Kiosks and signage with information about health in Cuba and the benefits of exercise will be displayed along with donors to the park in these areas. Among the seating areas along the loop trail, one long space south of the playground area near U.S. Highway 126 is designed as a bus stop for students. Allowing buses to drop off students at the park, decongests the school parking lot and encourages students to walk to school. St. Francis Park is approximately one-half mile from Cuba High school to the northeast.

Play

The location of the playground was maintained in this proposal but designed with the removal of the fence to allow the flow of children between other play structures in the park that flank the picnic and plaza area on the east side of the Eichwald Center. The short steel posts can remain as a visual boundary line for children and may be painted playful colors to emphasize the play area. By opening up this space and offering more play structures, parents will be able to locate seating in a central location to monitor their children. The playground is in much need of shade. This proposal introduces shade structures that also collect rainwater to irrigate the nearby landscape. This collected water could also be used to spray off the plaza space and play equipment as regular maintenance. The picnic and plaza area next to the playground would also be equipped with bbq grills, tables, seating, and lights. The area northeast of the Eichwald Center and connected to the picnic and plaza area is dedicated to popular sports in Cuba that are either not currently offered or that are offered and in need of improvement at the park. Basketball is a popular sport in Cuba and new courts arranged close to the building keep loose balls from bouncing too far from the players as well as limiting glare from the sun. The basketball courts also act as an extended plaza space where other games can be played or family events can be held. Local Cubans expressed interest in challenging natural play areas during a December workshop with SOCLAS and the National Park Service. As a response, this design incorporates a ropes course for older aged children and adults, as well as a sand pit for younger children. This space is an extension to the playground to the south and encourages unscheduled exercise for those there to watch. The ropes course includes balance games, agility tests, swings and team building elements. Horseshoe pits are designed into the space with enough pits for a tournament and aligned with the rest of the activities with the throwing of horseshoes away from pedestrians and children. Fortunately, horseshoe pits are low maintenance and inexpensive to install but fun for everyone.

Eichwald Center

The Eichwald Center is the main architectural feature of St. Francis of Assisi Park and sits almost directly in the middle of the park, making it visible from anywhere within the park boundaries. Since this structure lacks adequate natural lighting on the interior, it is proposed that windows be punched in the north side of the building as well as a door for public access between the building and activity areas. The park is also in need of some storage space to hold tools for maintenance in the park as well as sporting equipment that could be rented. A new storage unit addition on the northwest corner of the building would be used to store baseball equip, basketballs, roller-skates, footballs, discs, and pedometers as well as rakes, shovels, mowers and other trail and landscape maintenance equipment. This new storage addition provides opportunity to install a climbing wall on the east wall facing the other activities area. This location is ideal for reducing heat concerns on the wall and allowing a continued and multiple use of space and materials.

In addition to the storage room an enclosed indoor yoga and fitness room can be extended from the weight room and include windows to the west extending the indoor space into the outdoor Thai chi area continued from the building. The Thai chi plaza space is located with landscape nearby rather than distracting games and sports and can also be used to support family events, parties and gatherings or be used as an outdoor yoga space during good weather months. Thai chi can be done inside the yoga room during winter months.

Gardens

The garden area to the west of the Thai chi area is initially designed as an open space with rows of trees for users to improvise the use of the space. Access is left open from the parking lot with consideration that the space could eventually transform into a second community garden if desired. Since Cuba already has a local community garden it was not necessary to design one into this space but if the existing garden becomes popular and more residents are interested in more community garden space, this area would be readily accommodating.

Parking on the site cannot be ignored as 35 people were counted on a weekday afternoon in March during a site visit and up to 6,000 visitors come to St. Francis park for special events. This design proposes 90 formal spaces on the southwest side of the park with an informal gravel parking lot on the east near the baseball diamond that can park another 100 vehicles. These parking areas are great areas for staging during construction of the park and once built could be a perfect location for weekly

farmer's markets. The parking areas are sized to accommodate enough people for small events such as family parties and educational sessions combined with average users arriving to use the playgrounds, exercise rooms and trail system.

Parking

The parking areas purposefully limit the number vehicle spaces to promote walking instead of driving but are also large enough to provide parking for visitors or for those that live outside a one mile walking radius. Both parking lots are designed with pedestrians in mind as many New Mexico residents use parking lots as social gathering spaces. The west parking lot incorporates relief points in the hard edge of the parking to give particular identity to different areas of the lot. It is common for people to park in the same place when given the opportunity. This design allows spaces to become more identifiable through landscape and edge treatments. Porous surface materials for each parking lot should be considered as alternatives to asphalt in order to replenish the aquifer rather than allow water to run off into the drain at the southwest corner of the park. The park has very little slope and shedding water may be difficult and expensive to drain. Also, by using porous materials, St. Francis Park could become an example for other rural, high desert, communities that may not recognize the benefits of using such surfacing for parking lots.

Screens

Screening from winds and residential areas are mostly needed along the edges of the park to the south and west but vegetation and other physical design can be used more heavily to enhance monuments and other signage or seating areas or emphasize certain spaces. Landscape forms are used to separate or define spaces and to provide shade and aesthetic beauty to areas of the park. Donated Pinon trees are used along the edges of the park to filter wind which seems to come in different directions depending on the season. Large shade trees are used near the parking lots and near high density areas that are expected to be used the most to help cool those spaces. The east side of the park, if supported with maintenance and harvesting programs, could be planted with pear and apple trees which grow well in zones 4-9 USDA cold hardiness zones. Fruit trees on the east side of the park could be used as an educational opportunity for school students as many of them walk through this part of the park to get to school and could be sold at markets or donated to underprivileged families.

Trail Network

The perimeter and loop walking trails are most important to the residents of Cuba at this point as many are involved in walking groups and would like to see a path that can be prescribed by practitioners at Presbyterian Medical. A grant proposal through the federal Recreation Trails Program is currently being drafted to find funding to install this trail system by the spring of 2011. The trail system is a one-mile loop around the park with cut-off points for those wishing to only walk a half-mile and for those using the site for other activities. To indicate to users which trail they are on, lit bollards could act as both distance indicators and trail identifiers. The lights from these bollards are not to replace safety lighting but are aesthetic and functional in other ways. From this loop trail, which is a hub for future Cuba trails, other trails branch away. One trail branches off to the west leading toward downtown Cuba. Another trail cuts through private property northeast of the park and leads to the elementary and high school grounds up the hill. This property owner has been approached about allowing access through his property in a continuing effort to improve safe routes to school in Cuba. A third trail is proposed leading south from the center of the park to access the current community gardens and possibly the Library. Of course this trail would have to be approved through easements and donations before construction but is another likely connection from the hub that is St. Francis Park.

Conclusion

Each piece of programmed activity was designed with consideration that the space could be used for a combination of activities. Based on the amount of financing and eagerness of volunteers some features may not be implemented or may be moved or changed to accommodate the needs of the community. For this reason, Nacimiento Medical Foundation and the Village of Cuba may want to produce a priority list that clearly defines the features that are most desirable and those that are most feasible to implement. This priority list should be combined with a timeline of work based on uncertainty of funding. A regulative plan of action for the future, combined with the illustrative plan provided in this proposal should give St. Francis of Assisi Park a realistic and energetic future. As with most conceptual master plans or long term design goals, this plan will have to accept changes and adapt to the evolving needs, values and funding of the Village. Nothing in this plan is absolute but rather one ideal solution to a health epidemic and social need. As the reasons why or justifications for these designed elements change, so must the plan and solution. The adjustments inevitably made to the future park plan will be decided by those that recognize the need for it. For example, if the Eichwald Center addition intended to be used for indoor yoga and Thai-chi instruction is not used, it should be re-purposed for use as extra storage space, extended weight/cardio rooms or some other specified need. Ultimately, all of the elements seen in this plan are not intended to be unfunctional or exclusive. Certain elements of the plan may change but one key element deserving to remain is that this park should promote healthy and active living at whatever capacity possible. With this objective in mind, future design solutions will be on track to provide the Village of Cuba with the tools needed to form a healthy community.