Project Year-End Summary Report

Title of Project: Open Space - Native Habitat & Outdoor Learning Enhancement

Begin answering in the shaded box right beside or below each question and it will expand to accommodate as you type. Use up to a total of two and a half pages for questions 1-8. More detailed presentations, a final report, articles or posters are welcome separately (See final instructions at the end of this form.)*

1. Organization name or Individual who received the grant: Dona Ana Village Association (DAVA)

2. Amount of Grant: $1,350

4. Was additional outside funding obtained? (check box that applies) Yes X No

Other funding source(s) if you checked "yes."

Additional support for the overall El Parque Alegre project has been provided through the New Mexico Trails+ Program, Outdoor Equity Fund, Doña Ana County, and other community partners. These funds support different phases of park development, youth engagement, and outdoor education. The Carter Conservation Fund specifically supported native plantings, habitat restoration, and our educational rainwater collection project.

5. Briefly, how was the grant money from the Carter Conservation Fund used?

The Carter Conservation Fund support funded the purchase and planting of native vegetation, the assembly of a DIY educational rainwater collection barrel, and materials for native habitat restoration and outdoor learning activities at El Parque Alegre de Doña Ana.

6. Write an abstract or summary of the activities performed and the progress that was made this year on your project. (Save any conclusions, lessons learned, and benefits achieved for the final sections, 7&8.)

With support from the Carter Conservation Fund, DAVA completed native planting and educational improvements within the habitat and outdoor classroom areas at El Parque Alegre de Doña Ana.

Our summer youth interns, under the guidance of DAVA's Trail Manager, Akirha Wilson, played an important role in restoring native plants, adding new plantings, and learning about the surrounding desert environment. We also organized educational site tours and developed a fun native plant quiz to help youth identify plants and understand their importance to local wildlife.

Another completed activity was assembling a DIY rainwater collection barrel as an educational tool to introduce youth to water conservation and the benefits of using natural resources responsibly.

These activities are part of DAVA's ongoing vision of developing El Parque Alegre into a campus of learning where youth and community members can experience conservation, outdoor education, and environmental stewardship firsthand.

7. How does your project further a Native Plant Society mission area, namely: *plant or ecological education; conservation/restoration of native plants and/or their habitats; adds to botanical research; promotes appropriate use of native plants to conserve water, land and/or wildlife.*

This project supports the Native Plant Society's mission through native plant restoration, ecological education, habitat improvement, and water conservation.

By planting native species, DAVA is helping restore areas of El Parque Alegre while creating habitat that supports local birds, pollinators, and other wildlife. These plantings also provide opportunities to educate youth about plants adapted to our desert environment and the importance of conserving water.

Through hands-on planting, educational tours, native plant identification activities, and our DIY rainwater barrel, youth learned how plants, water, soil, and wildlife are connected.

Our goal is to build an appreciation for native plants while encouraging young people to take an active role in caring for the natural spaces within their own community.

8. Any other conclusions, lessons learned, benefits to you, the community or the environment hopefully result from your work as assisted by this grant.

One of our greatest lessons this year came from observing how water moves through El Parque Alegre. As the County's Abeyta Pond project changed portions of the landscape, we discovered areas where water naturally collects. Although some pooling caused damage to our trails, it also helped us better understand where future native plantings could benefit from natural water collection.

Akirha worked alongside our youth interns to turn these challenges into learning opportunities. Youth were able to see how conservation involves observation, problem-solving, and understanding the land before making improvements.

The Carter Conservation Fund allowed DAVA to complete the planned native planting and rainwater education activities while providing meaningful hands-on learning experiences for our youth.

Although the grant-funded activities are complete, El Parque Alegre remains an ongoing community project. We envision the entire open space as a campus of learning, where our outdoor classroom, native habitat, trails, and natural landscape provide opportunities for youth and families to connect with nature, learn new skills, and become stewards of their community.

The greatest benefit is not only what we planted or built, but the knowledge and sense of ownership our youth are developing through the experience.

Final Instructions

Please send your completed form as a PDF email attachment to cartergrantapps@gmail.com by November 1, 2026.

* *To remain in good standing for any future funding from the Native Plant Society of New Mexico, we ask that you educate our membership more fully in some way. This could be an article (250 words minimum, at least 1 high resolution illustration or photo) for our newsletter,* ***or*** *a paper or electronic copy or link to a published article connected with the past year's work,* ***or*** *by making an educational and visual presentation to one of our chapters. Contact*

information for our 7 area chapters is found on our website at www.npsnm.org under the Chapters tab.

What are your intentions in this regard? DAVA's article highlighting El Parque Alegre and our native habitat restoration efforts was published in the October–December 2026 NPSNM Newsletter.

This year end report is submitted by (Type your name) Stephanie Vargas

My typed name is equal to my handwritten signature in testifying to the accuracy and truth of this report to the best of my knowledge today.

eMail address DAVA.stephanievargas@gmail.com

Date
10/30/26
Please contact us again at cartergrantapps@gmail.com if you have any questions or alternate suggestions.