



A New Beginning for the Pajarito Environmental Education Center

PEEC: From Humble Roots to New Digs

From our humble beginnings, when a dozen citizens gathered at a dining room table to dream about ways to celebrate the natural world of Los Alamos, to our future home in an inspirational building perched on the edge of a canyon, PEEC's mission has been the same: To enrich people's lives by strengthening their connections to our canyons, mesas, mountains, and skies. For 13 years, you have made PEEC a home for nature on the Pajarito Plateau.

Since PEEC's inception on Earth Day 2000, an ever-growing number of children, adults, and families have enjoyed our programs, created by dozens of volunteers and experts. Your support in 2012 allowed us to offer almost 200 public programs on topics ranging from wildflowers to mountain lions, 139 free school programs (valued at nearly \$70,000) for 5,765 students, and to host over 1,000 visitors at the Center.

PEEC's Role in Our Community

Over time, PEEC has grown to become a community treasure, a gathering place, and a portal to the Pajarito Plateau. Your donations of time and resources have created a vital sense of community around our magnificent outdoor scenery and empowered people to feel comfortable exploring our canyons and mesas. You've made a place for families and individuals who come from around the globe to connect with nature and with all of us who live in this special community. As you've helped us to grow our PEEC network, we've been able to bring in more professionals – experts in their fields – to give people the tools and knowledge they need to feel at home with nature.

As PEEC has grown over the years, so has Los Alamos as a destination for visitors from around the state, country, and even the world. People come here to visit the Bradbury Science Museum and the Los Alamos Historical Museum, drawn by the rich history of this unique town. But once they are here, the incredible vistas of our canyons, mesas, mountains, and skies take their breath away. Let's give them a reason to extend their stay: a visit to a new world-class nature center where they can discover more about our natural beauty.

What's Next? The Building Is Just the Beginning

A signature building needs interior exhibits worthy of the exterior. In our public-private partnership, the County will build the nature center and PEEC will provide the exhibits.

New indoor and outdoor exhibits will replace the beloved but homemade exhibits in the present building. These will be professionally designed and fabricated exhibits, custom-made to meet the needs of our residents and visitors.

What Kind of Exhibits Will We Create?

The new building will provide space for innovative and attractive exhibits, including:

Indoors

- Exhibits focusing on our canyons, mesas, mountains, and skies
- Wildlife viewing room with quiet space and library
- Live animal exhibits
- Children's discovery area
- Planetarium/lecture room for talks, films, events, and more
- Outdoor gathering space with Jemez Mountains views and interpretation
- Changing exhibit space, including a community gallery
- Dedicated classroom for schoolchildren and public programs
- Engaging, interactive exhibits that get people of all ages excited about getting outside



Outdoors

- Wildlife/bird viewing area
- Kids' vegetable garden
- Butterfly garden
- Xeric garden
- Nature play area (e.g., fort building, mud kitchen)
- Nature Trail and connections to County trails
- Quiet and lovely spaces to enjoy native plants and animals



PEEC has hired Santa Fe firm Andrew Merriell & Associates to design and develop the exhibits for the new center. The firm has a proven record of identifying opportunities to advance beyond the usual and predictable museum offerings, finding innovative ways to immerse visitors in exhibit stories. The list of museums they have worked with is long and impressive: Shangri La Botanical Gardens and Nature Center, National Museum of the American Indian, the Museum of International Folk Art, and recently an expansion to the North Carolina Museum of Science.

How Will We Pay for Outstanding Exhibits?

The new exhibits will allow PEEC to share our love of nature in a way that simply can't be done now. But of course, it comes at a cost. While Los Alamos County will fund the building, PEEC is committed to raise \$1,000,000 to cover the expense of exhibits that are on par with professional museums nationwide. To pay for the new exhibits, PEEC has launched a capital campaign called "Take Wing with the Nature Center." This, the first capital campaign in the organization's history, will raise funds for exceptional exhibits at the beautiful new nature center.

The Need Is Now

With your support, PEEC has professionalized and grown in recent years, pushing its limits to offer more programs, publications, and events to the community. Now it's time for PEEC to professionalize and grow its exhibits, and we need your support more than ever. It's an exciting and welcome challenge, but time is of the essence. It would be a disaster to open this signature building with exhibits that don't match up to its potential. The new building is scheduled to be finished by Earth Day 2015, so the need is now.

When the ribbon is cut and the doors open for the first time in 2015, you'll be greeted by stunning exhibits demonstrating the wonders of the Pajarito Plateau. The exhibits you'll have helped us build will excite and engage residents and visitors, strengthening their connections with our natural world.

Let's Give Nature a Home

PEEC and the new nature center are \$1,000,000 away from making history. You have an opportunity to be part of something great, something that has never been done before in Los Alamos. Your gift will send a message to the world that Los Alamos cares about nature. It will offer an enticement to families and businesses to move to the area and stay once they're here. You can create a treasured home for nature in our community.

How Will the Nature Center Benefit Our Community?

When you give to the nature center, you give to the community. All the money raised in this campaign will stay in Los Alamos, enriching the lives of your neighbors and friends.

Your gift will

- affirm our environmental stewardship.
- share important lessons about fire ecology, environmental sustainability, xeric gardening, and area trails.
- provide a home for the Jemez Mountains Herbarium, an important scientific resource.



- contribute to our downtown vibrancy with a signature building.
- broaden the theme of “Where Discoveries Are Made” from atomic energy to the world of nature.
- reveal Los Alamos as a destination for eco-tourists and lovers of the outdoors.
- unglue people from their computer screens— give them skills to engage with nature around them and get everyone outdoors for healthy activities.
- provide a gateway to the Pajarito Plateau, the Valles Caldera National Preserve, and Bandelier National Monument.

What Is Your Role?

You can be involved at any level, whether it be providing feedback on exhibit designs, or supporting a particular exhibit or activity. This will be *your* nature center. As a donor, your name will be prominently displayed on donor recognition spaces, which will become permanent features in this new signature building. When you walk into the new building for the first time, you will know that you were instrumental in its creation. We can't do this without you.

The exhibits you help us create will last for many years. This kind of quality requires a large, up-front investment. Your exhibits will be a permanent installation that will enrich lives for generations to come.

It's an exciting time to be involved with PEEC! We invite you to take wing with the nature center, and make this dream – many years in the making – a reality.