



Enchanted Circle Trails Association

Developing, maintaining, and promoting trails in northern New Mexico
info@enchantedcircletrails.org

ECTA Quarterly Report July-Sep 2023

Summary

Enchanted Circle Trails Association (ECTA) develops, maintains, and promotes a trail system throughout the Enchanted Circle. The following is a summary of actions last quarter and includes all jurisdictions (*i.e. BLM and US Forest Service and local units of government.*)

Trail Maintenance

Trail Stewardship & Adopt-a-Trail

ECTA facilitated 1,454 hours of volunteer work on trail maintenance and trail events in 2023. This was performed by 116 individuals at 22 different events.

During this quarter, ECTA coordinated eight Adopt-a-Trail maintenance days and two National Public Lands Day event, during which 53 volunteers contributed 375 hours of work on area trails.

We continue to grow the Adopt-a-Trail program, through which local businesses and organizations adopt trails to help with general maintenance and upkeep, including:

- Red Willow Hospice
- PPC Solar
- New Mexico Volunteers for the Outdoors
- Taos Ski Patrol
- Taos Mountain Bike Association
- Moreno Valley Trekkers

We will be working with additional groups next spring and encourage businesses, organizations, or community groups to join.

Trail Master Training

ECTA's annual Trail Master Training will be held again in the spring of 2024.

Trail Promotion and Outreach

Trail Race Volunteers

Creating a passion, appreciation, and culture of trail love doesn't just involve swinging tools. Recognizing this, ECTA supported two community trail events this quarter, coordinating volunteers in support of the Village of Taos Ski Valley's Up and Over race, as well as Taos Ski Valley's Bull of the Woods Trail Races.

A huge thank you to the 65 ECTA volunteers who donated 459 hours of their time to support these trail events for our community, which brought participants from near and far to enjoy healthy, trail-based recreation.



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Slow and Say Hello Campaign

With publication in the Land Water People Time and inclusion on the regional trail kiosks (see below), ECTA has officially begun rolling out our "Slow and Say Hello" education campaign:

"We have a lot in common. Whether you're on foot, hooves, or wheels, slow and say "hello" when you pass fellow travelers. We all deserve safe trails."

This doesn't supplant the traditional who-should-lead-to-who triangle but emphasizes the importance of being neighborly and responsibly sharing trails.

User Group Brochures

ECTA distributed 1,500 user group brochures throughout the Enchanted Circle this quarter. The updated maps are easier to read and provide more trail information to better orient the public on regional trail opportunities. A special thank you to Taos Mountain Bike Association for partially underwriting the re-print.

Regional Trail Map Kiosks

In partnership with Rocky Mountain Youth Corps, five kiosks have been installed in Taos County, the Town of Red River, the Village of Questa, the Village of Taos Ski Valley, and the Carson National Forest Questa Ranger District. The information panels are being installed and will provide a general orientation to trail etiquette as well as provide an overview of regional and local trails our community may be interested in visiting.

Regional Trails Database

ECTA continues engaging with community volunteers to compile a comprehensive regional trail database. This information will be used to coordinate work projects with agency partners, feed eventual web-based trail information, and provide a consistent overview of our trails.

Trail Outreach and Communication

ECTA continues to enhance our trail outreach and communication, primarily through social media, website, and print media. During the last quarter, we increased Facebook followers by 3%, Instagram followers by 1%, and email subscribers by 12%.

Community and Strategic Planning

ECTA continues to remain actively engaged in various community planning and outreach activities to ensure that trails and the healthy outcomes they provide our region are considered.

Taos Tourism Revisited: ECTA participated in a working group session and community survey and broadly distributed information to ensure the diverse voices of our neighbors are



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represented in this effort. We look forward to the results of this project and are encouraged by the strong community support for trails and outdoor recreation as a key part of a sustainable tourism strategy for the community of Taos.

Taos County Economic Development Summit: ECTA participated in the first summit held by Taos County to discuss the future of the county's economic development. During this working group session, trails, bike paths, and connected communities were repeatedly cited as the strengths and opportunities for Taos County. We look forward to finding new ways to help develop more of these "opportunities" into "strengths."

Rio Fernando Collaborative: ECTA is excited to be a part of this collaborative effort to clean up, restore, and envision a future for the Rio Fernando as it passes through the town of Taos. Sustainable trails should be a key part of providing access to and appreciation for our community waterways and green spaces.

Congressional Advocacy: ECTA joined trail advocates from around the United States to meet with members of Congress in Washington, DC, including Senator Lujan. The purpose was to emphasize the importance of trails for communities, advocate for increased funding for trails on public lands, and support long-distance trail infrastructure such as the Continental Divide Trail and Rio Grande Trail, which both positively impact the Enchanted Circle region.

Trail Development / Roadway Improvements / Connectivity	
Project	Status
NM150 Multi-Use Pathway from US64 to Arroyo Seco	After additional planning meetings with Taos Pueblo, Taos County, NMDOT, and other stakeholders, ECTA has finalized the requests for proposals for survey and engineering and is in the process of soliciting and selecting contractors. The goal is to complete the survey and engineering by the 2nd quarter of 2024 and begin soliciting funds for construction.
Questa to Red River Trail (Q2RRT)	The Request for Proposals for selecting a contractor to conduct the National Environmental Policy Act process survey is still awaiting approval from Carson National Forest. Meanwhile, in partnership with the Questa Economic Development Fund, ECTA will begin surveying additional trails and recreational areas along the main Q2RRT to help develop a connected recreation plan for the area.
Talpa Ridge System	The USFS Carson National Forest continues to digest and consider the large volume of public comments received during the Talpa Working Group process. At this time, there has been no decision, or information, about how the Forest plans to address the issues of erosion, trespassing, and user conflict that currently exist due to unmanaged recreation in the area.



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Rio Grande Trail – Bridge to Bridge Segment	Progress on this section of the Rio Grande trail has been put on indefinite hold as the BLM finalizes the Rio Grande del Norte Monument management plan.
Horsethief Mesa Trails	<p>The BLM and Carson National Forest are finalizing details of the Special Use Permit for the BLM to develop the new trail parking and access point near the county transfer station.</p> <p>ECTA has begun looking for funding/grants to conduct required archaeological surveys of planned new trails in the area.</p>
Taos Valley Overlook	No action was taken this quarter.
Outward Link Trail	The lawsuit filed by the Town of Taos to regain access to the Town's easement continues to work its way through the legal system.
Bull of the Woods to Big Ditch	No action was taken this quarter. ECTA will continue to support the Forest Service on this project.
Miranda Canyon	No action was taken this quarter. ECTA will continue to support the Forest Service on this project in preparation for a NEPA evaluation in 2024.