



Enchanted Circle Trails Association

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

ECTA Quarterly Report Oct-Dec 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 from 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 applied for and received a NM State Trails+ Grant to help support our Adopt-a-Trail program and trail stewardship activities. We have begun purchasing a suite of trail tools and a trailer that allows us to host trail maintenance activities more efficiently.

Our goal for 2024 is to bring on five new Adopt-a-Trail businesses/groups to help maintain an additional 25 miles of trails in the region.

Trail Master Training: ECTA and the Carson National Forest's annual Trail Master Training will be held on May 25-26 in Red River (location TBD).

This 2-day, mostly field-based course is free and provides volunteers with the skills and knowledge needed to maintain area trails effectively.

Legacy Trails Grant: On behalf of the Carson National Forest, ECTA has submitted a grant application to increase the sustainability of certain trails in the Rio Fernando Watershed. Projects include re-routes of highly erosive sections of trail, installation of a bridge in a headwater wetland, and improved signage to reduce user impact on riparian areas. ECTA plans to accomplish these projects through partnerships with Rocky Mountain Youth Corps, local businesses, and volunteers. Successful applicants will be notified at the end of February.

Trail Promotion and Outreach

Regional Trail Map Kiosks: In partnership with Rocky Mountain Youth Corps, we completed the installation of the five kiosks at 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.

These regional trail maps provide an overview of all the trails in the Enchanted Circle Region and familiarize the viewer with three trails close to where they are standing that they may be interested in visiting.

User Group Brochures: We will resume distributing user-group brochures this spring.

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.



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Trail Outreach and Communication: Our trail outreach and communication efforts provide timely information about trails and trail issues and provide pathways for folks to get involved with the trail community. Current outlets include social media (Facebook, Instagram), our website, and print media. During the last quarter, we increased Facebook followers by 1%, Instagram followers by 2%, and email subscribers by 4%. Additionally, we saw a 52% increase in website traffic.

Community and Strategic Planning

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

Taos Metropolitan Redevelopment Area: ECTA has begun working with Taos Mainstreet and community stakeholders to ensure that walkability and bike-ability remain a cornerstone of downtown investment and revitalization. More information about the MRA:
<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/3e1137310d8a4dc7a512072cfe203db8>

Taos Tourism Revisited: ECTA continued participation in working group sessions and is encouraged by the strong community support for trails and outdoor recreation as a critical part of a sustainable tourism strategy for the community of Taos.

Rio Fernando Collaborative: ECTA continues to be a part of this vital initiative and recently submitted a grant to help improve the sustainability of trails within the Rio Fernando Watershed. (See above).

Friends of the Rio Grande Del Norte National Monument: ECTA has joined this new support group, an initiative of New Mexico Wild. ECTA will continue to advocate for community access to the National Monument through well-managed recreation trails while supporting other group initiatives.

Outdoor Economics Conference: ECTA participated in the outdoor economics conference, networking with like-minded community leaders and municipalities to learn how to achieve our organizational goals effectively.

USFS Carson National Forest Partnership Workshop: ECTA attended the first CNF Partnership workshop, during which we brainstormed with Forest leadership and community stakeholders about how to implement the Forest Plan while ensuring that the needs of the local people are incorporated into forest management.

Trail Development / Roadway Improvements / Connectivity	
Project	Status
NM150 Multi-Use Pathway from US64 to Arroyo Seco (Taos Pueblo/NMDOT)	ECTA has selected an engineer to develop plans for this project. Community and stakeholder meetings will be held during the first quarter of 2024 to ensure the infrastructure is designed to meet the public's hopes.



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Questa to Red River Trail (Questa/Red River/USFS)	ECTA is hiring a contractor to conduct a NEPA environmental assessment for the planned trail to begin surveys in the spring. Meanwhile, field crews have refined the proposed trail layout to avoid riparian areas as much as possible while creating a positive and unique user experience.
Largo/Llama Canyon Trails (Questa/USFS)	The Village of Questa and Questa Economic Development Fund received a grant to create a community-driven plan for Largo and Llama Canyon recreation trails. They selected to map existing trails and create a conceptual plan for the region.
Talpa Ridge System (USFS)	At this time, there has yet to be a decision 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.
Rio Grande Trail – Bridge to Bridge Segment (BLM)	No action was taken this quarter.
Horsethief Mesa Trails (BLM)	ECTA is applying for a grant to conduct required archaeological surveys of planned new trails in the area.
Taos Valley Overlook (BLM)	No action was taken this quarter.
Outward Link Trail (Town of Taos)	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 (USFS)	No action was taken this quarter. ECTA will continue to support the Forest Service on this project.
Miranda Canyon (USFS)	ECTA joined the Carson National Forest on a field scout of Miranda Canyon to begin determining trailhead locations and trail layouts and brainstorm the best approach for implementation.
Palo Flechado Trail (USFS)	Volunteers have continued to build a re-route of the connector trail between Palo Flechado Pass and the Elliott Barker Trail. ECTA has applied for funding to support the completion of this trail.
North Boundary Trail (USFS)	The Carson National Forest has approved a 1-mile re-route of a fall-line section of the trail to reduce erosion and bring the trail to sustainable best practices. ECTA has applied for funding to support the completion of this re-route.