

Open Space and Trails

Parks and Recreation Board Presentation



Evolution of Trail Use

- Ancestral Pueblo people used these trails to navigate through the rough canyon country
- In 1887 Hispanic homesteaders built trails in order to gain access to their mesa top homesteads for agriculture purposes
- In 1918 the Los Alamos Ranch School built more trails leading to and from their campus. As part of “learning by doing” philosophy many horse trails were constructed, many displaying sophisticated dry laid stones retaining walls.
- The Pajarito plateau saw change in 1943 when the US Army took over the Ranch School and the homesteads to develop the Manhattan Project. Many of these trails were abandon until after the Army left the plateau and Los Alamos began to grow.
- Los Alamos County assumed the active management of the Los Alamos County Trail Network in 2003 when the Open Space Task Force recommended and the County Council approved the creation of a staff position to oversee the more than 4,000 acres of County-owned open space.
 - Additional FTE funding was allocated in 2019





History of Open Space and Trails

- Los Alamos County Council established the Trails & Pedestrian Pathways Committee (TPPC) on March 1, 1993. TPPC was charged with drafting a master plan for developing an integrated network of trails for commuting and recreation to serve county residents and visitors.
- The first Trail Policy Plan was proposed by the Trails and Pedestrian Pathways Committee in 1994 and adopted by the Los Alamos County Council on July 18, 1994.
- Upon adoption of the Trails Management Plan, the County Council converted the TPPC from an *ad hoc* committee of the County Council to a subcommittee of the Parks and Recreation Board, henceforth known as the Trails and Pathways Subcommittee (TAPS).



2009 Trails Management Plan



- The Trail Management Plan is an outline for implementation of maintenance and enhancement of the trail network.
- The Los Alamos County Parks and Open Space Division is responsible for the day-to-day operations and maintenance of more than 65 miles of trail within the County open lands
- The Los Alamos County Trail Standards establish construction detail for ensuring a safe, inviting trail network within Los Alamos County.
- The Los Alamos County Council adopted the Trail Management Plan in March 2009.



Key Objectives of 2009 Trails Management plan

- **Proposed additions to the Trail Network**
 - Pueblo Canyon Trail Extensions
 - Completion of the Tent Rocks Trail
 - Canyon Rim Trail Extension
 - Completion of two segments of Canyon Rim Trail
 - Third segment is in design phase
- **Upgrade wayfinding signs, maps and trailhead kiosks**
- **Enhanced the trail network by connecting trails**
 - LA Mesa Bypass trail, Kwage Mesa Connector Trail





LOS ALAMOS COMMUNITY TRAILS PLAN 2013

- In 2013 Los Alamos County Parks and Open Space Division worked with the Trail Solutions program of IMBA to develop a shared-use community trails plan for the Los Alamos County Trail Network.
- Plan development involved several tasks including stakeholder meetings, site inventory and assessment of existing trails, study of conceptual trail design options, and the proposal of a sustainable, destination-quality shared-use trail system that will meet the needs of residents while attracting new visitors.





OPEN SPACE MANAGEMENT PLAN 2015

- The Los Alamos County Open Space Management Plan is intended to provide an outline for active stewardship of Los Alamos County natural areas and to identify a contiguous open space system that is managed in a consistent manner and that provides corridors for outdoor recreation, wildlife movement, ecosystem processes, and wildland fuel management.



Open Space Management Key Objectives

- **Defining Open Space**
 - Modified parcel zoning to create an Open Space system - Comp Plan 2016
- **Natural Resources**
 - Use of County Invasive Species plan to monitor and control non-native species
 - Awarded an on call canyon restoration contractor
 - Restored Graduation Canyon 2019
 - Conducted Canyon assessment for potential restoration projects 2023
 - Annual clean-up events
 - White Rock Tire removal project and trash removal projects
- **Trail stewardship**
 - Monthly volunteer opportunities
 - Continued partnership with YCC
 - Awarded an on call Trail maintenance contractor





Current Resource Management

- Volunteers and Youth Conservation Corp groups have played a pivotal role in building and maintaining trails
- Contracted trail companies are beginning to assist County staff with maintaining trails
- Los Alamos County Parks and Open Space are continually hiring staff to perform trail maintenance
- Grant funded projects
- Communication and documentation from trail users assist staff in trail and open space management efforts



OBSERVATIONS AND CHALLENGES



- Increase multi recreational use on trail network
- Increased use of electric bikes
- Limited parking for increased use
- Providing access to recreational users of all abilities
- Conflicts between users
- Balance use and preservation
- Trends in recreational use
- Balance of uses with regard to surrounding area
- Historical and cultural sites
- Wildlife management



NEXT STEPS...

- Create a management plan that incorporates all plans
- Continue to build volunteer opportunities
- Continue to engage with stakeholders on trail opportunities
- Provide a guiding document for the next generation of users with a balance of use and preservation
- Establish standards for trails and open space

