

Enchanted Circle Trail Plan Meeting Summary

September 26, 11 am to 1 pm
600 Valverde Commons

Participants

Amy Simms, Forest Service	Jonah Salloway, Vibram USA
Amy Morris, The Trust for Public Land (TPL)	Judy Liles, Sunset Park
Ben Soderquist	Kerrie Pattison, Taos Ski Valley, Northside and Park and Rec Commission
Ben Thomas, Rocky Mountain Youth Corps/DNMA	Kevin Lehto, US Forest Service
Brad Higdon, BLM – Taos	Kip Price
Carl Colonius, Del Norte Trails Coalition/Taos Land Trust	Kristin Ulibarri, Valverde Commons
Charles Earhart, Angel Fire	Kristina Ortez de Jones, Taos Land Trust
Cheryl Hedden	Lara Miller, TPL
Chris Malashi	Larissa Schaetz
Cindy Brown, Taos Hiking Guide	Lindsay Mapes, Zia Rides
CJ Maluski	Mark Kemper
Claire Latowsky	Mark Sundin
Darren Bond, Gearing Up	Martha Morgan, Taos Saddle Club
David Frazer, Frazer Family Farms	Matthew Foster
Derek Gordon	Michael Martinez, Rough Riders 200
Drew Maxwell, AAFPO Angel Fire	Nancy Montoya
Eddie Dry	Nina Anthony, Taos Land Trust
Eileen Weidner, BLM	Patrick West, Angel Fire
Fred Gifford, TPL	Peter Rich, Carson National Forest
Hogan Kersis, Angel Fire	Rich Montoya
Jake Caldwell, LOR Foundation	Shari Heier, Gearing Up
Jeff Muggleston	Stephens Hall
Jennifer Hauser, Carson National Forest	Susie Soderquist, Des Montes
John Hall, Hay Farmer	
John Miller, Planning, Town of Taos	

1. Welcome and Trail Committee Background

Participants introduced themselves and noted where they were from and where their last hike or bike ride had been. Stakeholders attending the meeting were from diverse areas including Hondo (2); Rancho (4); Taos (17); El Prado (5); Angel Fire (4); Questa; Canon; El Salto; Red River; and Earthship.

Carl Colonius provided a brief history of previous trail planning efforts in the area, including the recent work of the Del Norte Trails Coalition. He noted that this current conceptual trail planning process is largely about setting community priorities about where we need more trails. Carl also discussed the importance of having a dedicated core group of stakeholders who will stay involved in the process in the long term in order to make sure the trail plan gets implemented.

2. Meeting Goals

Amy Morris from TPL reviewed the goals of the meeting: (1) Review existing trail data; (2) Reach consensus on a final study area boundary; (3) Define trail planning areas; (4) Develop a

list of obstacles/challenges to plan implementation (so that we can develop a plan that will work); and (5) Begin brainstorming new potential trails and trail connections.

3. Review Existing Data and Discuss Study Area

Fred Gifford from TPL noted that we already have trail data from the Forest Service, BLM, Taos Ski Valley, State Parks, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, and Map My Ride. One participant recommended cross-checking current trail data with local trail guide books.

The group discussed the study area for the trail plan and reached consensus on expanding the study area beyond the Enchanted Circle in the east to include Eagle Nest and Colin Neblett Wildlife Area, in the west to include Rio Grande Corridor from Taos Valley Overlook north to the Rio Grande Del Norte, and in the south to include Carson National Forest Trail north of the NM518. The revised study area map is included at the end of this meeting summary.

4. Define Trail Planning/Trail System Areas

Fred and Carl led the group in beginning to identify distinct trail planning areas. Planning areas will be used to help break up the study area in ways that make sense based on geography, land management/owners (e.g., public lands), and user groups. Preliminary trail planning areas include: Taos Valley Overlook; Taos Ski Valley; Horse Thief/Cebolla Mesa linked to Gallina; in town commuter trails; Red River (upper); Miranda Canyon; and Lower Red River Valley.

5. Small Group Discussions of Obstacles and Constraints

Participants split up into four groups to discuss the major constraints/obstacles to developing an expanded trail system. Small group discussions were led by Fred, Carl, Lara Miller (TPL), and Kristina Ortez de Jones (Taos Land Trust). At the end of small group discussions, flip chart pages listing each group’s ideas were posted in the hallway. Each meeting participant was given four dot stickers to mark the four constraints that they felt were most important to address.

Groups came up with a wide range of important obstacles and constraints. They also discussed potential solutions such as volunteer-led “adopt-a-trail” programs in Carson National Forest and elsewhere and possible local requirements that developers mitigate for impacts by developing trails. Identified obstacles generally fell into the categories shown in Table 1, which are shown in order based on the number of priority votes they received.

Issue Identified	Priority Votes
Public Agencies – lack of resources, complicated process (NEPA, management plans, etc.)	13
Inadequate Current Infrastructure – lack of signage was identified as a particular concern	10
Broad Plan Goals – the study area is very big and addressing both in-town and wilderness trails is very ambitious	8
Limited Capacity – local governments, agencies, organizations have limited funds, staff time, and general support	7
Lack of Awareness – trail planning is relatively new to the area and many	4

Issue Identified	Priority Votes
people may not know enough about the importance of local trails	
Private Land – it can be complicated to work with private landowner to get access and trail easements	4

Participants also noted that cultural perspectives on (and resistance to) tourism can be a challenge in expanding trails.

6. Trail Workshop

After the discussion of constraints, the same small groups reviewed the draft trail maps and provided input about where they think potential new trails/trail connections should be developed. Feedback on these maps will be incorporated into future discussions of trail expansion.

7. Closing

Kristina thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and asked participants to please let Taos Land Trust know if there are additional groups and individuals we should reach out to about the trail plan.

Next Steps

- **Mapping/Technical Advisory Team** will start meeting (by phone/computer) soon. If you are interested in participating in these calls, please contact Fred (fred.gifford@tpl.org).
- Taos Land Trust and TPL will continue to conduct **speak outs** in fall 2015 (and possibly winter 2016). These are tabling events where we provide information about the Trail Plan and Community Conservation Plan and ask for community input. Please contact Amy (amy.morris@tpl.org) or Kristina (kristina@taoslandtrust.org) if you have suggestions for events where we could reach a large number of community members, especially community members who are not likely to attend stakeholder meetings.
- Taos Land Trust and TPL are conducting a **community survey** this fall to gather perspectives that will inform the Trail Plan and the Community Conservation Plan. Please fill out the survey here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/taoscounty>. Please ask friends, family, and colleagues to fill out the survey as well.
- Taos Land Trust will continue working on **expanding the diversity of the stakeholder group**. There will be speak outs and focus groups that will be organized to encourage participation by diverse groups. Any and all feedback related to reaching diverse groups is welcome. Please contact Kristina (kristina@taoslandtrust.org).
- The **next stakeholder meeting** will be Wednesday, November 18 at the [Talpa Community Center](#) in Ranchos de Taos. This will be a joint stakeholder meeting for both the Trail Plan and the Community Conservation Plan.

