

Trail Talk presented by the Southern New Mexico Trail Alliance – Revised Minutes

15 July 2019

34 people attended with representatives from:

- The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) – Las Cruces District and Organ Mountains Desert Peaks National Monument
- City of Las Cruces (CLC) Parks and Recreation Department and City Council
- Dona Ana County (DAC) Planning Dept.
- Mesilla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MVMPO): Staff and BPAC members
- Friends of Organ Mountains Desert Peaks (FOMDP)
- The Monumental Loop
- Southern New Mexico Trail Alliance (SNMTA)
- Velo Cruces
- Zia Velo
- Many public trail users: hikers, runners, cyclists

Missing from this discussion included: representatives from NMSU, State Land Office, and equestrians

Summary/Goal of conversation

Updates:

SNMTA – Proposal submitted with BLM for trail connector between Tortugas Mtn and Soledad Canyon Rd. Waiting for review.

Dona Ana County – Sam Paz

- submitted application for projects in Dona Ana and Chaparral, multi-use asphalt trails.

MVMPO - Michael McAdams.

- Projects in progress:
 - Calle de Norte extension from La Llorona Park/trail through Mesilla to Union Path. This would complete the City loop.
 - Walnut area bike lanes
 - Multi-use path from University (Convention Center) to intersection of Main and Idaho. This is the Las Cruces Lateral. This is a City of Las Cruces project funded by the Dept. of Transportation RTP.
 - Road diet is planned for Main St. between Boutz and Valley

- Buffered bike lane constructed along Valley Dr. from Picacho Ave. to Hadley Ave. will be extended south.

City of Las Cruces - Cathy Matthews –

- GO Bond Trails (include link) –
 - Armijo lateral - Burn Lake north to outfall channel,
 - Las Cruces Lateral and Campo,
 - Outfall Channel to Quesenberry Lateral to Field of Dreams to Mesilla Drain to Burn Lake
- Other City Projects:
 - SW Loop - City of Las Cruces will partner with DAC and town of Mesilla to complete loop outside of City Limits Burn Lake to Laguna latera to California Lateral to Laguna to Union Path. Pursuing private funded grant Laguna lateral from where GO bond trail ends. Will connect to Union multi-use trail (private since outside city limits).
 - Parks and Rec Master – Sonya Delgado (CLC Parks and Rec)
 - Plan approved by CLC City Council on July 1. CLC funding can only go to projects within city limits, so open spaces beyond city limits are being considered for connectivity. Project overview is online at elevatelasruces.com.
 - Visit Las Cruces has an open position for Outdoor Recreation Economic coordinator.
 - Opening for Active Transportation Planner closes next week in community development department. (include links)

BLM

- Steve - BLM working Right of Way for Continental Divide Trail (CDT) through State Land Office in New Mexico. BLM state office (Sara Naranjo) is working with the SLO on this.
- BLM Outdoor Rec Planner, Marten Schmitz has 68 active permits going – trying to manage them – Lots of maintenance of agreements.
- OMDP Edna, funding has not been allocated to begin planning process for OMDP Resource Management Plan (RMP). No projected funding date or update on the timing of this.
- Trackways has RMP and can go forward. Meeting with contractor next week to start planning improvements, e.g. Shade shelters, pit toilets, interpretive signs, maps. Trails will be in next phase of RMP. The second phase will begin in approximately 260 days. Volunteers could be utilized on trail phase.

Discussion

George – Rio Grande Trail Commission? Pete said whole commission had to be re-appointed with the new administration – Pete has applied – no word yet – apparently on hold.

George Pearson – need to encourage county lawyers to talk to EBID lawyers. EBID needs a MOU with County to let anything happen, but county lawyers won't talk to EBID. NMDOT Univ Main street to Highway 28 – will add multi-use trail where 66 ft ROW allows

Phil talked about plans for residential development of the “Sandbox” area west of Sonoma Ranch Blvd., east of Missouri Ave., and north of Centennial High School, including the east extension of Missouri Ave. and Enchanted Drive. The plan is open for comments at elevatelascruces.com.

Michael McAdams – thoroughfare plan isn't accurate – multi-use path desired by residents and was proposed in past plan but lacks funding. The roads seen in the development plan are advisory and not planned for construction.

Working MTP – Metropolitan Transportation Plan – will be working in fall with public input meetings. MPO Contact him with ideas for grant proposals. Federal funding comes on a two year cycle.

Andrew Bencomo and Sonja Delgado – East Mesa sports and recreation complex under planning – 10 acre parcel – will be opportunity for public comment

State Lands - Much access to OMDP is through state lands. There is signage that discourages use. Users mentioned they would love State to establish trailheads to encourage access to OMDP. Dan: New state land office is more open to recreation but state process requires leasing land. Patrick: need funds for surveying, etc, but long term. Patrick has a meeting scheduled with SLO to work on right-of-way issues.

Question: Blue signs on state land indicate recreation permit needed. Dan said need state recreation pass \$35/yr to get off established roads but can drive through pass. Recreation permit for state trust lands, can say “all state lands” on application. Include link.

Rene – exchanges between BLM and State Lands – new state admin working on exchanges, good opportunity for public to propose specific locations. Steve said State land areas within new wilderness areas will be made BLM.

OMDP Wilderness – Edna (OMPD Rec. and Wilderness Planner) don't yet have official maps. Steve - 10 new wilderness areas, highest level of protection. Seven out of the ten new, designated Wilderness areas were Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) so have been managed as wilderness, three are new areas. Wilderness.net is best source of current information. The Wilderness Planning Process will allow for public comment.

Rico Smith discussed the prohibition of motorized and non-motorized vehicles within the Wilderness areas. Signage has been installed on Modoc Mine Road and other areas within the Wilderness to denote no vehicles/bicycles.

Edna - Portions of Sierra Vista Trail will be rerouted to the originally intended alignment. Volunteer opportunities to help will be within the calendar year. Dan said some funds from the SVT work grant may be available.

Shawna and Patrick BLM applied to land and conservation fund to purchase three parcels of private land to access Ackenback Canyon (and connect area to the west with Pena Blanca Loop, if I understood this correctly?).

Volunteer and Input Opportunities

Shaunna Foster runs CLC also has a teen program who might be able to help SNMTA with trail work (Ryan Steinmetz is city Teen Connection Program Director).

BLM needs help with re-routing of ridge line trail in Trackways soon. Will avoid most of ridgeline with re-route.

Sam Paz discussed DAC illegal dumping program and the use of the “No Throw” app to identify locations for cleanup. Dan recommended everyone download and use this app to report trash on trails and public land.

Feedback – get someone from State here, also NMSU people. Agreed on a similar meeting in about six months. Email southernnewmexicotrailalliance@gmail.com for comments/ideas/suggestions.

Dan mentioned Parks and Rec Master Plan Incorporated ideas from Trail Summit for interjurisdictional connectivity.