



Ed MacKerrow <mackerrow@gmail.com>

Fwd: Nambe Badlands Trail

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Torres, Tami M** <[REDACTED]@blm.gov>

Date: Fri, Mar 23, 2012 at 2:01 PM

Subject: Nambe Badlands Trail

To: Bob Ward <[REDACTED]@rei.com>, "DesGeorges, Sam A" <[REDACTED]@blm.gov>, "Bailey, John R" <[REDACTED]@blm.gov>, "Sundin, Mark E" <[REDACTED]@blm.gov>, "Carpenter, Michael S" <[REDACTED]@blm.gov>, "Gustina, Gregory W" <[REDACTED]@blm.gov>, "Dicks, Ayers M" <[REDACTED]@blm.gov>, "Williams, Valerie A" <[REDACTED]@blm.gov>, "Barbara Swanson" <[REDACTED]>, "Chris Barnes and Patricia Greathouse" <[REDACTED]>, "Chris Sheehan" <[REDACTED]>, "Dale Abrams" <[REDACTED]>, "Dave" <[REDACTED]>, "David Abrams" <[REDACTED]>, "Ed MacKerrow" <[REDACTED]>, "Felicia Trujillo" <[REDACTED]>, "Fernando Garzon" <[REDACTED]>, "Gary Puro" <[REDACTED]m>, "Heith Martinez" <[REDACTED]>, "James Rutledge" <[REDACTED]>, "Janet Griego" <[REDACTED]>, "Julie Friedman" <[REDACTED]>, "Karen Griego" <[REDACTED]>, "Linda Fluk" <[REDACTED]>, "Lisa henne" <[REDACTED]>, "Melinda Baker" <[REDACTED]>, "Scott Lucido" <[REDACTED]>, "Susan Meadows" <[REDACTED]>

Hi all-

Here is a re-cap and update of items BLM has agreed to move forward with in regards to the unauthorized trail building in association with an ongoing project plan. I also hope to address your questions with this memo and provide alternate dates for volunteers to work with BLM on unauthorized trail closures and signing.

Thank you all again for your interest, time, participation, and collaboration! J

- We will work with neighbors, users, and volunteers to close unauthorized sections of newly built trail. We will also close the unauthorized two mile trail that was constructed about a year ago.
- We will place a sign at the trailhead off of CR503 past the gate which states the acceptable and unacceptable uses of the area according to TAFO sign standards. We will use slash from a current thinning project at the scout camp to close these trails. Fiberglass signs will be placed beyond each closure area to reinforce the message at the trailhead to stay on trails and observe all trail closures.

- A sign will be placed near CR113 on private property (with permission) generally stating NO Access, Use 503 access.
- BLM will continue the environmental analysis for the maintenance and trail re-route project. Previously identified issues are: soil, recreation, paleontology. An alternative will be developed to address the cultural resource, wildlife, and social issues as well. Wildlife and Cultural inventories or investigation will be conducted.
- The schedule for this work will flow at a pace that generally follows the TAFO Annual Work Plan (of all projects within the office) and according to existing staff schedules and workload. However, the intent is to complete the closures of unauthorized routes within a month and complete the project EA in the late spring or early summer in order to implement trail maintenance with a BLM hosted volunteer work party by the end of the fiscal year, (Sept. 30).
- **Alternate dates for BLM and volunteer work on closures of unauthorized routes: April 6 or April 13 beginning at 10AM. If you would like to help, please let me know which date works for you and I will send a confirmation.**

Some detail regarding the Environmental Assessment:

- The process for EAs is to identify a Purpose and Need for action, develop a Proposed Action, identify issues, develop alternatives, analyze each resource affected by issues/alternative actions, solicit feedback of the draft document, respond to comments, draft a FONSI and Decision Record (which may have additional mitigating stipulations).
- The scope of this project is very small. It includes maintenance of the existing three mile loop. An environmental analysis was started rather than a categorical exclusion due to a proposed re-routing of the trail to address erosion and improve drainage. To follow are some sections from the draft EA. We will request review of the EA when we complete the analysis of the project for each resource.

Nambe Badlands Trail

The Nambe Badlands Trail is located in the Sombrillo Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) within T20N, R09E, Sections 26 and 27, and the NE 1/4 of Section 35. The informal trailhead begins off of the NM 503 Highway shoulder adjacent to the Nambe Pueblo boundary. The trail takes off from an old two track route used for grazing. Various segments of the northeastern portion of the trail run directly up and down the fall line. This has resulted in poor drainage, trenching, and soil loss as water runs down the trail bed. One area of the trail has become unsafe for users because a wash is eroding into the trail and creating a sudden drop off.

Maintenance and re-routing of the trail is needed to address soil erosion and the degradation of the trail bed. There is only one sign post at the trailhead. More signs are needed to inform users of the regulations, acceptable activities, trail length and trail location.

The Nambe Badlands Trail is a user created, easy, non motorized, single track loop about three miles in length. The trails offers outstanding views of uplifting sandstone, featuring cliffs and spires, within the Espanola Basin. It's located along NM Highway 503, (Cundiyo Road) between Nambe and Santa Cruz Lake. There is a wide shoulder and a gate adjacent to the tribal land boundary on the western side of the highway. It seems to be used primarily by residents of Santa Fe County. However, it's posted online at several sites; *irunfar*, *Mountain Bike Review*, *Trails, etc.*, and *Backcountry Horseman* (Santa Fe Chapter). The trail is also listed in *Hiking Adventures in Northern New Mexico*. There are several side trails coming into the Sombrillo ACEC and connecting to the Badlands trail from private and tribal property. Activities on the trail are hiking, running, dog walking, mountain biking and horseback riding.

Local hiking and biking groups such as REI, Santa Fe and the Santa Fe Fat Tire Society have expressed a lot of interest in maintaining the Nambe Badlands Trail and providing volunteer labor. They are concerned with the condition of the trail and continued erosion and soil loss. They have contacted BLM numerous times over the last year and a half, requesting that work be done on the trail.

Since paleontological resources are identified with high value in the ACEC, the District Geologist was contacted and a field reconnaissance was conducted. Nothing was found on the surface to be of concern for trail maintenance, but it was determined that a geologist should be on site when ground disturbing work is

conducted.

Maintenance would be conducted on the existing trails by using a volunteer crew with hand tools. The main objective would be to keep water off the trail by using a combination of cross sloping (up to 2.5%), water bars, rolling dips, and slight, shallow cross trenching. Culverts would be used only as a last resort. Therefore, some re-routing, to leave the fall line and pick up contour, would occur up to 200 yards off of the existing trail route. Poorly drained, re-routed areas of the trail would be closed by camouflage using rock and vegetative debris on site. Other design features of the trail would remain the same and are up to 18" trail bed, used for non-motorized recreation, 8-10% running slope when possible. Some stone or wood steps may be used in short sections where the slope exceeds 15%. A Taos Field Office standard trailhead sign would be placed near the gate at the trailhead and non motorized, wooden directional signs would be placed at intersections of the trail.

Positive effects to recreation users would result from the Proposed Action. Soil loss would be limited resulting in a smoother trail bed and keep users on the trail rather than venturing off to avoid ruts and water. Trailhead and directional signs with a map and regulations will encourage appropriate behavior and protection of the resource. Increasing the appearance of management on site has shown to increase the value of a site on first impression and limit vandalism and depreciative behavior. Visitors are more likely to value and care for a site that is clean, attractive, and well maintained.

BLM is conducting a route inventory of the Palacio and Sombrillo planning units. In the near future, BLM will initiate a travel management plan for the Palacio and Sombrillo planning units. At that time appropriate access and route designations will be analyzed. The Travel Management Plan could affect trailhead locations, designations of existing routes and potential new routes/trails.