



Forest Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

The Dirt



Official Volunteer & Partner Newsletter of the Santa Fe National Forest

Fall 2023 | Issue 8

Welcome to our newsletter!

Your source for volunteer and partner news, events, ways to get involved, and resources on the forest.

In this issue...

- An End-of-Year Celebration
- Youth Tackle Watershed Restoration in the Burn Scar
- Thanks to a Friend of the Forest
- Volunteer Trail Group Highlights



The USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

RECRUITMENT CORNER

Upcoming Opportunities for Volunteer Work



September 23 - National Public Lands Day

We encourage folks to get out and care for your public lands. Whether it's picking up trash, taking on some [preapproved] trail work, or just enjoying your public lands, it's the perfect time of year to get outside and get your hands dirty!

September 23 - Perimeter Trail Work

Join Los Alamos County from 9am-1pm to work on the Perimeter Trail. Space is limited to 20 people. Meet at the Mitchell Trailhead on Arizona and 45th St. Click this link for more details:

https://www.volunteerlosalamos.org/need/detail/?need_id=821781

September 28 - Clearing on the Las Vacas Trail Loop with NMVFO

New Mexico Volunteers for the Outdoors will be backpacking into the San Pedro Parks Wilderness to clear and brush trails. Click on this link for more details: <https://nmvfo.org/projects/las-vacas-trail-loop-backpack-cuba-rd/>

October 5 - Volunteer and Partner Appreciation Celebration

Join us for an informal potluck-style luncheon to celebrate your work! Details on the next page.

Trash Pickers Wanted - The Pecos/Las Vegas District is looking for volunteers to help with picking up trash in Pecos Canyon in areas of high use. If you are interested in coming out to help at your convenience, contact Sarah Smith (sarah.smith3@usda.gov).



**Please join the
Santa Fe National Forest for a**

***Volunteer & Partner
Appreciation
Celebration***

Thursday October 5th

11:30-1:30

Little Tesuque Picnic Site

Hyde Park Rd, Santa Fe

(click for map)

**Come socialize, celebrate your
accomplishments, and grab a
thank-you gift from the forest.
Please bring a dish to share!**



In the event of a government shutdown, this celebration will be rescheduled.

WORKING AND LEARNING THROUGH WATERSHED RESTORATION

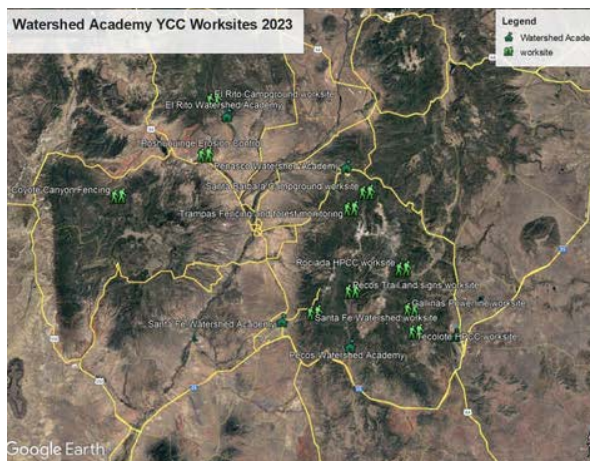
This summer, youth from River Source's Watershed Academy worked with the Santa Fe National Forest on a variety of projects. The organization recruited and hired 35 individuals between the ages of 15 and 25 years old in communities around Northern New Mexico (El Rito, Pecos, Peñasco, Las Vegas/Mora, and Santa Fe), all of whom were locals. Crews worked on a variety of projects from monitoring and data collection to mapping and analysis. Much of the work completed in the Santa Fe National Forest occurred in the Hermits Peak/Calf Canyon burn scar and aimed to improve watershed-scale conditions in impacted areas. Each Watershed Academy crew term culminated in a community presentation to share details of work accomplished and provide participants practice in public speaking and engaging with the communities they served.



In a few short weeks, crews accomplished:

- Monitoring and erosion control
- Plant and invasive species identification
- Photo monitoring
- Sign installation
- OHV trespass and erosion prevention
- Wild and Scenic River stewardship
- GPS data collection
- Water quality monitoring
- Erosion assessments and identification
- Forest fuels analysis

Thanks to River Source's Watershed Academy teams for your hard work on the forest this summer!



KUDOS FROM THE FOREST

Submit your “kudos” for folks who are doing a great job and we will highlight them in the next issue!



TRAIL ADOPTERS

We'd like to give a shout-out to all our trail adopters! This season, we highlight the work of David Hampton, Steve Daly, and Stuart Castle. These folks have dedicated time and energy on specific trails for which they have become the caretakers. They return to these trails time and time again to maintain them. This season, Steve and David addressed overgrowth on Los Alamos's Canyon del Valle Trail and Stuart opened up Beatty's Trail early in the season for users. Thanks to you all for keeping these trails in such great condition.

SANTA FE FAT TIRE SOCIETY

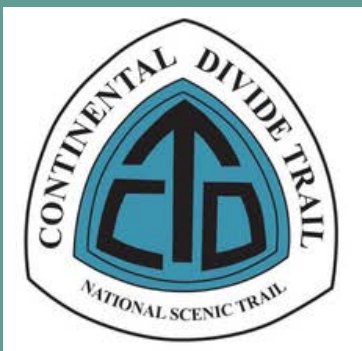
This season, members of the Santa Fe Fat Tire Society installed eye-catching forest-approved signs intended remind mountain bikers to slow down at key intersections. We thank organization members for leading the way in reducing user conflict and promoting responsible riding for mountain bike recreationists. To see more of the signs they installed on Santa Fe National Forest trails, check out the Winsor trail from Tesuque.



“HAPPY TRAILS” TO GARY HOLCOMB



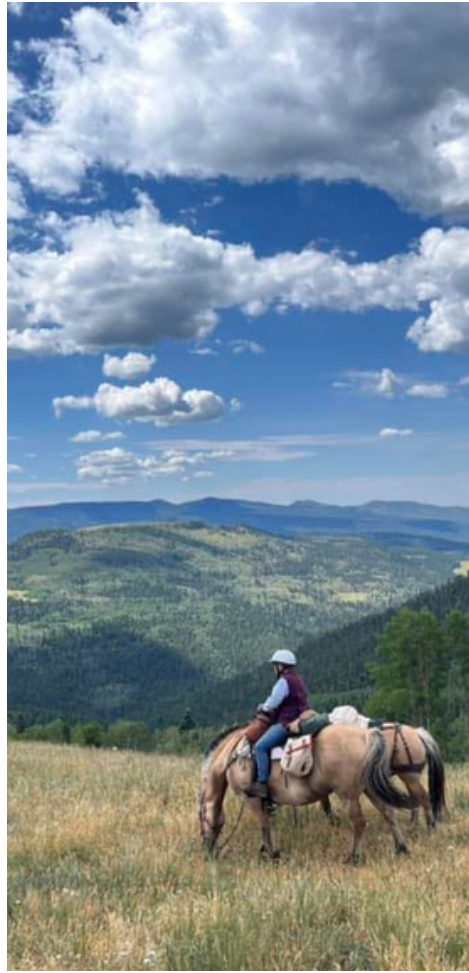
**“THANK YOU” TO A
TRUE CDT CHAMPION**



**AFTER 13 YEARS WORKING
AS A TRAIL VOLUNTEER,
GARY IS MOVING ON**

As our volunteers and partners know, trails do not maintain themselves. They take a great deal of dedication, time, and effort to keep open and in safe condition for public use and enjoyment. Luckily, the Forest Service is able to rely on our volunteer and partner base for accomplishing these tasks and keeping our trails useable. One such volunteer- who adopted a 17-mile segment of the Continental Divide Trail- is Gary Holcomb. Gary mastered the art of trail work and improved trail sustainability and longevity throughout the forest during his time as a volunteer. He posted signs along the trail and ensured trail safety and accessibility for users. He exhibited a level of care and stewardship for trails that was admired by all who worked alongside him. Gary worked on the CDT for years from New Mexico to Colorado, and forged positive and lasting connections with all Forest Service employees who had the pleasure to work with him. We are sad to see Gary go, but we'll think of him every time we hike the section of trail he adopted and stewarded for all those years!

Some words from Lynn Bjorklund to Gary:
“You are, and always will be, a part of the Continental Divide Trail, which would not exist except for people like you who dedicate so much of their time, energy and resources into making it a reality. Thank you!”



PACKING INTO THE PECOS

The Pecos/Las Vegas District would like to extend our appreciation to the Pecos Chapter of Back Country Horsemen for their work packing in several volunteer groups and youth trail crews into the Pecos Wilderness all summer long. Your help getting gear, tools, and food deep into the wilderness allows for a much more productive trail work season. Thank you!

END OF YEAR REPORTING



HAVE YOU SUBMITTED YOUR HOURS AND WORK REPORTS YET?

At the end of each year, the Santa Fe National Forest reports everything our volunteers and partners accomplished throughout the year. This can help us leverage funding and resources for future reimbursements and programming needs. Thanks for sending reports of your work accomplished and person hours spent volunteering.

Questions about reporting or getting us the most helpful information? Ask your district volunteer coordinator!



NM Wild Highlights

THANKS TO THE NM WILD RANGERS FOR IMPROVING WILDERNESS TRAILS & SIGNAGE AND CONDUCTING TRASH CLEANUPS ON THE FOREST THIS YEAR!





SEARCHING FOR FALL COLORS?

Check out this interactive nationwide fall foliage predictor to see when your favorite spots on the Santa Fe National Forest will peak!

click the link below to explore the map

<https://smokymountains.com/fall-foliage-map/>

YOUR VOLUNTEER CONTACTS

Española and Coyote Districts

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Cuba District

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Jemez District

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Pecos/Las Vegas District

Sarah Smith sarah.smith3@usda.gov

Forest Recreation Program Manager

Vacant - reach out to the districts for now.

Congrats to Jeremy Golston, who is now the Jemez District Ranger!

