



NEW MEXICO RAILS-TO-TRAILS ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 97

CURRENT INVOLVEMENT

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Grady Nicholson – President
Cam Wilde – Vice-President
Ken Hensley – Treasurer
Laura Letterman – Secretary
Doug Holcomb
Matt Willett
Rod Sims

TRESTLE RESCUE

NMRTA has formed a new committee, headed by Lynn Melton, to rescue the trestle on the Bonnie Brooks property. Our purpose is to save and preserve as much of the existing trestle as possible with the final goal of making safe, usable and educational for the public. The trestle is one of the very few structures still standing on the original Cloud-Climbing railroad route and offers great potential as a learning tool, particularly with the new footbridge along side offering a clear structural view of the trestle from underneath.



2014 ACTIVITIES

Our last newsletter was released in January 2014. We've been extremely busy over the last 7 months and thought it would be a good time to get everyone up to date again!

2014 ANNUAL MEETING

On May 2nd we held our annual meeting at the Cloudcroft Lodge's Pavilion. Our guest speaker for the meet was **Dr. Bill Boverie** who delivered a *Chautauqua*. Dr. Boverie spoke through the words and character of William Ashton Hawkins, the attorney for the Eddy brothers and was instrumental in the foundation of Alamogordo and establishing the local railroads. It was an extremely entertaining and educational talk and we were certainly lucky to have him!

James Duran, a Sacramento District Ranger, spoke briefly about the current funding and other limitations the Forest Service has concerning new trails.

Returning board members as well as new board members were elected in. The current list of member is in the sidebar of this newsletter!

SPIKE AWARDS

Don Draney, NMRTA Vice-president and long-time board of directors member retired from the board. Don was awarded the Rusty Spike for his outstanding support as a board member.





CONTIGUOUS TRAIL

Planning continues to develop new forest land trails combined with our existing Cloud-Climbing Rail Trails to form a contiguous trail from Cloudcroft to La Luz. Additional trail blazing needs to be done, permission to establish new trails needs to be obtained, and some land access issues need to be resolved before this can become a reality. This will be a continued primary activity for Rails-to-Trails for the remainder of 2014 and into 2015.

(Spike Awards cont'd) The Marion Harkey award went to **Rod Sims, Russell Espenhain, Glen Fess, and Kevin Rucker & the Holloman AFB volunteers** for their sustained trail building support.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

At the business meeting following the Annual Meeting, **Rod Sims, Matt Willett** and **Doug Holcomb** were elected for two year terms to the Board of Directors. Matt and Doug are returning board members. **Grady Nicholson** remained on as President; **Cam Wilde** was elected to replace Don as Vice-President; **Ken Hensley** was re-elected as Treasurer; and **Laura Letterman** stayed on as Secretary.

NATIONAL TRAILS DAY

On June 7th we held an event and ribbon cutting ceremony at **Bonnie Brooks'** property, "Shortcut to the Trestle" which was opened to the public for the first time on National Trails Day. Approximately 115 people passed through the area that day and we had about 50 more take the shortcut on the following day. It was a great event with **Smokey Bear**, Rails-to-Trails educational displays and posters and lots of food! Board members and volunteers will be staying at Bonnie's cabin over select weekends throughout the summer so that the shortcut can be open as much as possible. Check out the schedule in this newsletter!

WORK DAYS

During the first six months of 2014 we had an amazing 14 workdays which included eight extra days working on an erosion control project on the Bridal Veil Falls trail and Bonnie's 19-Day Bridge.

We worked the Dog Canyon trail (always a challenge), a section of the upper Bridal Veil Falls trail where we installed a culvert as well as a lot of ditching and tread improvements, and we started work on the tread and trail clearance on the Switchback Trail from the Harkey Pedestrian Bridge up to the lower shelter. There's more work still needed to be done on the

(Work Days cont'd) Switchback Trail! It was a busy seven months and we expect it to remain pretty busy throughout the rest of the year!

EROSION CONTROL PROJECT

About 1/2 mile down the upper Bridal Veil Falls trail when starting at the trailhead junction of Bridal Veil Falls and Grandview trails on your left you may notice a new elaborate erosion control structure! The original structure was already there before but was in poor shape and wasn't doing its



job of keeping water flow in order to prevent further erosion of the trail. It was probably around 100 years old and was originally built by the railroad folks. Replacing the damaged areas and rebuilding the structure was a tough project. About 50 large pieces of timber (some as large as 8"x16"x10') had to be manhandled into place and fastened together with steel pins. Most of the lumber had to be purchased but some of the original lumber was reusable, and some lumber left over from the recent stabilization of the Mexican Canyon Trestle was used. We're not sure if any similar structure were ever built at any other location on the cloud-climbing railroad. The action was requested and funded by the Forest Service as part of their Heritage program. Overall, the project required three regular monthly workdays and four extra workdays. At least two dozen different volunteers generated over 160 man-hours of labor. Much of the volunteer support was from Holloman AFB.

Again, the structure is located on the upper Bridal Veil Falls Trail, about 1/2 mile down trail from the junction of the BVF and the Grandview trails on Fresnal Canyon Road. It's worth a look.

BONNIE'S 19-DAY BRIDGE

This footbridge was built to bypass the old railroad trestle on the Bonnie Brooks property when it was realized that the small trestle next to it would take extensive repair to make it safe for public use.

The bridge is 20 ft long by four ft wide. Most of the lumber was purchased, but the main load carrying members were made from timbers left over from the recent stabilization of the Mexican Canyon Trestle and donated by the Forest Service. The Forest Service also provided significant engineering design support.



It was constructed in 19 days to meet the scheduled 1st time public opening on National Trails Days of the "Shortcut" to the Mexican Canyon through the Brooks property.

The build was accomplished by 100% volunteer labor! 18 or so individuals generated over 165 man-hours of labor — one regular monthly workday and four extra workdays. We had extensive volunteer support from Holloman personnel.

EARTH DAY

Our Earth Day booth was put together, funded and operated by our dear **Judy Henry** with some help from Laura Letterman and others. The even was very successful! Judy had a table set up to make necklaces and keychains using strings, beads and wood discs advertising NMRTA. The crew was busy from start to finish with adults as well as kids!

NEW MAPS/BROCHURES

As mentioned in our January Newsletter, NMRTA printed and distributed some 4000 of our brochures during 2013 and we're still going strong! **Lynne Skinner**, who does most of the brochure distribution, is having trouble keeping up with the demand! We recently placed an order for another 5000 brochures to replace our rapidly depleting stock!

THE DEPOT GARDEN

Roger Parker and **Kathleen Newton** have given the Cloudcroft Depot garden a real "native plant" look. Keep up the great work!

WE APPRECIATE OUR 2013 CORPORATE SPONSORS!

- High Altitude Cloudcroft
- Cam will Design Alamogordo
- The Tool Store, Inc Alamogordo
- Outdoor Adventures Alamogordo
- Lincoln National Forest Cloudcroft
- Sacramento Mtns Historical Society Cloudcroft
- Village of Cloudcroft
- Cloudcroft Kiwanis Club
- Michael Nivison Public Library Cloudcroft
- Scotty LPG Cloudcroft
- Mountain Monthly Cloudcroft
- Native Plant Society of New Mexico Alamogordo
- The Mountain Monthly Cloudcroft
- Gluth Law Las Cruces
- Perspar Enterprises Alamogordo
- The Lodge Resort & Spa Cloudcroft
- Cloudcroft Chamber of Commerce
- Alamogordo Chamber of Commerce
- The Tunnel Stop High Rolls
- CVE Machine & Welding High Rolls
- Alamogordo Daily News
- Hash House Harriers Holloman AFB
- BP Fabric of America Fund Houston, TX
- Investment Co of the Southwest Albuquerque
- New Mexico Skies, Inc. Mayhill

NMRTA Work days are most often held on the third Saturday of each month from 9:00am until 12:00 noon. You do not need to be a member to attend the work days. Volunteers of all skill levels are welcome and there's always something to do for everyone. Just bring your drinking water, work gloves, sturdy boots and sun protection. All tools will be provided.

To receive notifications of our upcoming workdays by e-mail, please send a message to nmrailtrails@gmail.com with the word "WORKDAYS" in the subject line.

NMRTA Annual Memberships	
NMRTA is a 501(c)(3) Organization	
Business/Organization	\$20
Family	\$15
Individual	\$10
Student	\$5
Membership	\$ _____
Donation	\$ _____
TOTAL	\$ _____

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Phone: _____
(Home) (Work) (Cell)

E-mail address: _____

Please let us know if & how you would be willing to support NMRTA in addition to coming out on our trail-building workdays. We do everything we can with volunteers; so let us know about your talents and we'll call on you when the need arises. Thanks!

- Lead guided hikes Give educational talks Write articles Graphic design
- Fund raising Plan events Membership drive Historian Grant writing Other

Remit to: New Mexico Rails-to-Trails Association, PO Box 44, Cloudcroft, NM 88316-0044



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