

NEW MEXICO RAILS-TO-TRAILS ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 96

CURRENT INVOLVEMENT

2014 ANNUAL MEETING

Arrangements are in progress to hold our 2014 Annual Meeting in early May – again at the Cloudcroft Lodge Pavillion.

BRIDAL VEIL FALLS ACCESS

We have reopened the effort to gain **public access to Bridal Veil Falls** through private property via the Harris Hollow Gate. Currently, access to the Falls requires a hike of over two miles, one way. The intended shortcut is only about one-fourth of that. NMRTA is working with the Forest Service to identify the proper paperwork and restrictions to make the land owner comfortable with granting access.

CLOUD CLIMBING RAIL TRAIL

NMRTA's intention from the start is to make the *Cloud Climbing Rail Trail* a **contiguous trail route** from Cloudcroft to La Luz, using as much of the original rail bed as is practical. Unfortunately, due to reluctant land owners and with a few exceptions, it looks like we have reached that practical limit. **But**, we still intend to develop a contiguous trail, and two significant gaps in the existing



2013 ACTIVITIES

Since it's been a while since we issued a newsletter, we thought we would summarize NMRTA's activities for last year, 2013, and share with you our current involvement.

BROOKS PROPERTY

Of major significance is that **Dr. Bonnie Brooks** has deeded to **NMRTA** the remainder of her property that lays just up-trail from the Mexican Canyon Trestle. This pristine forest area is immediately adjacent to the property deeded to NMRTA by Dr. Brooks in 2007. This combined area of several acres is granted to NMRTA on a life estate basis, and includes original railroad bed, a beautiful cabin, a railroad trestle, and provides a scenic shortcut to the Mexican Canyon Trestle. We plan to open this to the public on select weekends in 2014, with the initial opening on **National Trails Day, Saturday, June 7, 2014**. A short dedication ceremony, refreshments and other activities are planned. Put that date on your calendar!

ANNUAL MEETING

Our **2013 Annual Meeting**, May 10, 2013, was held at the Cloudcroft Lodge Pavilion. Our Speaker was **Jim Breyfogle**, a noted ultra-trail runner from Rio Rancho, NM. Also, **Peg Crim**, Forest Service representative, and **Tom Henzl**, a *Hash House Harrier* from Holloman AFB, both spoke to the group. **Judy Henry**, one of the four original founders of NMRTA,





(*Cloud Climbing cont'd*) trail need to be completed to get this done – one between the Switchback Trail and the Grandview Trail, and the second between the Salado Canyon Trail and La Luz. To this end, two board members, **Doug Holcomb** and **Don Draney**, have spent many hours in the forest identifying trail possibilities along both sections ... and they think they have been successful! Most of the new trail will be on forest land which makes the likelihood of permission high, but permitting can take time. When this becomes a reality, there will be *many* miles of new trail to be built.

NORTH-SOUTH TRAIL

Due to health reasons, Mr. **John Stockert**, a volunteer to the Forest Service, had to step down as head of the **North-South Trail** development. The Forest Service has only recently identified someone to take over for John. Consequently, this effort did not see much activity this past year, *except ...* NMRTA spent a lot of time, and some money, working with the State of New Mexico during 2013 to obtain permission to cross their land (as part of the North-South Trail) near the water treatment facilities at La Luz. The current situation is that they want considerable money, up-front, to lease the crossing for several years. Not a good solution for us.

(*Annual Meeting cont'd*) officially relinquished her position on the Board of Directors on which she served since 1994 when the organization was formed. Judy recently ramrodded NMRTA's booth at the **2013 Earth Day** event. Her "spike drive" and "pull-back train" were extremely popular with the kids. Judy has even more ideas for the 2014 event.



SPIKE AWARDS

Steve McCloskey, Forest Service, received our *Rusty Spike* award for his engineering support to NMRTA, and **Judy Johnson** received the *Golden Spike* for her long time commitment to NMRTA and membership on the board. Judy is the only person to have received all three of NMRTA's *Spike* awards.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

At the business meeting following the Annual Meeting, **Grady Nicholson** (elected Board President), **Ken Hensley** (Treasurer), **Diana Calkins** (Secretary), and **Cam Wilde** were elected for two year terms to the Board of Directors. Continuing board members **Don Draney** (also elected Vice-President), **Doug Holcomb** and **Matt Willett** have another year remaining on their Board membership. Diana Calkins had to relinquish her secretary responsibilities later in September due to business commitments, and was replaced by **Laura Letterman**, a Test Track engineer at Holloman AFB.

WORK DAYS

We had 11 Monthly Workdays in 2013, with an average of 14 volunteers each workday providing over 500 man-hours of service. We did typical maintenance and water-bar building on our rail-trails – Salado Canyon, Bridal Veil Falls, Grand View, Switchback, and the Depot area trails. In addition, we rebuilt the Salado Canyon Trestle stairs, replaced a collapsing culvert on the Grandview Trail, made repairs to the Roads Canyon Trail (some 18 miles South of High Rolls ... the Tunnel Stop graciously provided parking for the 17 people making the

(*Work Days cont'd*) trip), worked two areas on the Rim Trail, and 19 volunteers wound up the year by making over 60 repairs and improvements along a mile and a half of the Dog Canyon Trail above Oliver Lee State Park. The Forest Service furnished manpower and the tools for each workday. It was a busy work year!



NEW MAPS/BROCHURES

NMRTA printed and distributed some 4000 of our brochures during 2013. Most of the distribution work was done by **Lynne Skinner** from her residence in Cloudercroft.

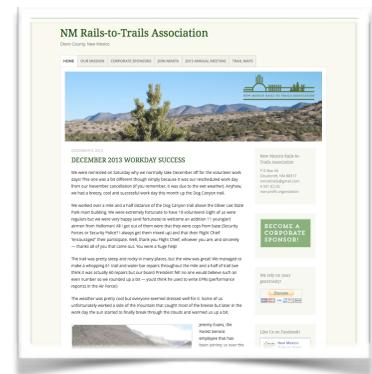
Lynne says the new observation area for the Mexican Canyon Trestle has proved to be a very popular distribution point for the brochures. Lynne also gathers mail from our Cloudercroft PO box and makes sure it gets to the “flatlanders” who are supposed to do something with it. Thanks for your help, Lynne! We have now started distribution of our new brochure. This new one is a very colorful and informative handout and was produced under the careful eye of board member **Matt Willett**. Our most popular rail-trails are vividly shown with aerial views of the terrain and informative descriptions of each trail.

THE DEPOT GARDEN

The Depot Garden at the Trestle Recreation Area is now under the professional care of **Roger Parker**, Master Gardener from the Native Plant Society. Roger replaced **Liz Block** who moved to California in early 2013.

NMRTA ENTERING THE MODERN AGE!

Under the guidance of design professional and NMRTA board member **Cam Wilde**, our website, www.nmrailstotrails.org, has really become a useful communications tool. Announcements of upcoming work days and follow-up information are the prime examples.



And since Cam introduced Flickr — <http://www.flickr.com/photos/nm-rails-to-trails/> — there are more photos available than anyone has time to view. A lot of NMRTA history and recent events are also available, and Cam has made it easy to make a donation or become a corporate sponsor by also introducing Paypal as a tool (DONATE online here: <http://nmrailstotrails.org/corporate-sponsorship/>). We also are on Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/NMRailsToTrails>, if you would like to comment on our activities!

TRAIL USER ACCESS

During 2013, NMRTA prepared and presented to the Forest Service, at its request, its recommendations as to which users (hikers, bikers, equestrian, motorized, etc.) should have **access to the various area trails**.

CLARKE & NOVEMBER EASEMENTS

NMRTA is grateful to acknowledge easements granted by **Mr. Larry November** and **Ms. Jean Clarke**. These properties are located near the mouth of Laborcita Canyon, just above La Luz, and include part of the original rail bed. They are an important part of NMRTA’s effort to develop a contiguous trail between the lower end of the Salado Canyon Trail and the north end of the North-South Trail near La Luz.

SPECIAL NOTICE

Except for Annual Meeting notices, this will be NMRTA’s final communication by postal mail, *UNLESS* you are an NMRTA member and *specifically request* otherwise. If you wish to continue receiving notices by postal mail, please contact us via e-mail at nmrailtrails@gmail.com or by mail at P.O. Box 44, Cloudercroft, NM 88317; or call Grady at 575-434-1949. NMRTA will continue to communicate via our e-mail lists and website, <http://www.nmrailstotrails.org>.

