

NAVAJO TRAILS INITIATIVE

History & Overview of the Navajo Trails Initiative

The Navajo Nation Trails Initiative was formally launched in fall 2015. The initiative was spearheaded by Vice President Jonathan Nez and Navajo nonprofit organization, Y.E.S. for Dine' Bikeyah (aka NavajoYES), with support from Division of Natural Resources (DNR), Office of Navajo President and Vice President (OPVP), Engineers Without Borders and various tribal entities, Indian Health Service and local communities.

The Task Force is focusing on four categories of trails: Community Trails, Trails in the Parks, Long-distance Routes, and Pump Tracks/Skills Parks.



Community Trails

The local community trails will be established under the auspices of the local community, with technical support from Southwest Trail Solutions (SWTS) and others who are partnering with the Nation.

Examples: Museum Trail; Tuba City Airport Trail; Kayenta MTB Trails; Shiprock River Trail; Dilcon mountain Bike trail system; Dine' College Pinon Trail

Trails in the Parks

The Navajo Nation Parks, as well as National Park Service sites within Dine' Bikeyah, contain some stunning trails. Navajo Parks & Rec and the Trails Task Force are identifying trails within the parks that could be developed and/or restored.

Examples: Wild Horse Trail (Four Corners), Little Colorado River Trails, Wildcat Trail (Monument Valley), Rainbow Trail (Lake Powell Navajo Tribal Park), White House Trail (Canyon de Chelley)

Long-Distance Routes

The development of long-distance routes through some of the remote, scenic areas of the Navajo Nation is a key component to the Trails Initiative. The goal of this element of the project is to designate long-distance mountain bike routes that will be used by Navajo Nation residents and non-residents alike in the pursuit of lifelong fitness, community wellness and the enjoyment of beautiful landscapes of Dine' Bikeyah. Some of these routes may be existing forest roads, old roadbeds, mining roads, etc. Routes will be designated as such through signage, maps and guides, as well as at established trailheads.

Examples: Chuska Mountain Route (BIA Road N30), Shonto-Navajo Mountain Route (BIA Road 6130), Old Hwy 64 Cameron-Grand Canyon (LCR Park)

Pump Tracks/Skills Parks

Pump Tracks are a recent phenomenon across the country, which resemble a "skatepark for bikes".

Example: Shonto Prep School

Navajo Nation Trail Guide & Calendar

Sharing the trails with our communities, the Navajo Nation at-large and, in some cases, the world beyond, is one of the goals of the trails initiative. Creating an interactive trails resource is a goal of the Trails Task Force, and the publishing of a “Navajo Nation Trails Guide” and an outdoor adventure calendar are in the works.

Trails Task Force

The Navajo Trails Task Force gathers monthly to share, brainstorm and update each other on projects in their communities and across the Nation. The Task Force was initiated by NavajoYES in 2015, and includes representatives from various communities, Office of President & Vice President, Division of Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation, Navajo Tourism, IHS Health Promotion, Southwest Trail Solutions, Engineers Without Borders, Navajo Forestry, Fish & Wildlife, Navajo Nation Museum, Navajo Division of Health, Dine’ College and Navajo Dept of Transportation.

The Trails Task Force also hosts an annual Navajo Trails Conference at the Navajo Nation Museum in February.

Resources

The trails initiatives is a grassroots effort that brings together community leaders and groups, nonprofits organizations, various tribal programs, the IHS Health Promotion program, among others. The projects also have been able to tap into remarkable resources that are spurring the growth of the trails initiative.

Listed below are groups that have been instrumental in supporting the effort and providing technical assistance to the project. You can reach them directly or through NavajoYES or Parks & Rec.

Y.E.S. for Dine’ Bikeyah (NavajoYES) – nonprofit organization spearheading the Navajo Trails Task Force

Tom Riggerbach

chuskaman@yahoo.com; cell: 928.429.0345

Navajo Nation Parks & Recreation Department

Alvina Arviso; Martin Begaye

ofc: 928.871-6647

Southwest Trail Solutions – technical support and training for trail design and construction

Mark Flint and Neil Stitzer

markflint@dakotacom.net; cell: 520.400.2050

Engineers Without Borders – designers of pump track projects and roadbed conversions routes

Trails 2000 (Durango area) – outstanding regional trail initiative; willing to work with rez communities

American Conservation Experience (Flagstaff) – professional trail builders/designers

International Mountain Bike Association – premier mtn bike org in the country; advocate for trails

National Park Service (Rivers, Trails and Conservation Program) – outstanding trail consultants

Y.E.S. for Dine’ Bikeyah (NavajoYES)

www.navajoyes.org