

The LANL Trails Management Program – A Better Path Forward

LANL recently began work on a Trails Management Program to address resource issues through improved and active stewardship. The Program results from an environmental assessment prepared by LANL in 2003.



Trails use at LANL is considered to be one of the benefits bestowed to workers and residents of the Pajarito Plateau. However, a program to balance recreational trails use with environmental, cultural, safety, security and social concerns has not materialized at LANL. The DOE directed that LANL look at establishing such a program, and the public offered over 125 comments on the draft environmental assessment. Representatives from San Ildefonso and Santa Clara Pueblos also participated and explained their concerns and perspectives. The Park Service and Los Alamos County cooperated as well.

The first step of the Program is establishing the Trails Assessment Working Group (TAWG). This group was described in the final environmental assessment approved by DOE/NNSA:

“LANL would lead and coordinate a standing committee that would include LANL cultural, ecological, health and safety, security, site planning, and facilities specialists and representatives from NNSA. Los Alamos County, Bandelier National Monument, the Santa Fe National Forest, and the four Accord Pueblos would be invited to participate. The Trails Assessment Working Group would convene as necessary to conduct trail assessments and needs identification and the health and safety, security, and resource assessments... The Trails Assessment Working Group would advise the LANL Associate Director of Operations (ADO) on trails management within LANL boundaries and, as appropriate, advise and represent the ADO on trails issues involving adjacent properties.”

The TAWG has met several times since December 2003. This year (2005), trails will begin to be inventoried along with other aspects of the funded work program. Over the course of the next ten years, some trails would be improved while others could be closed based upon recommendations made by the TAWG to the Laboratory's senior management. The Working Group is also looking carefully at how volunteer help could play a role in trails management at LANL, making the program more effective and efficient.

Regular updates on the progress of the TAWG will be provided. For more information please contact Dan Pava at 7-7360 or dpava@lanl.gov.