

New Trail: El Camino Real

In Mexico, the old Camino Real de la Tierra Adentro (the Royal Road to the Interior) which went from Mexico City to Ohkay Owingeh is a World Heritage trail. In the U.S., it's an NPS National Historic Trail. And by Saturday, June 2, a portion just north-west of Santa Fe was a lovely 6-mile trail for horses, hikers and bikers.

SF County Parks and Open Space employee Colleen Baker, who coordinated the project, said it was one of the most complicated projects the office has completed because of all the involved parties. The trail required coordination between USFS, BLM, NPS, DOT (federal); city and county of Santa Fe; local Pueblos with ties to the area; and user groups like equestrians represented by the Santa Fe Horse Coalition. Despite a forest-wide closure of SFNF, a special exemption was granted to allow all the parties to gather, celebrate and ride or hike the new trail on June 2. Julie Belt and Piar Marks of SFHC organized a ride attended by 24 equestrians to join the celebration.

The current portion of trail goes from the easily-accessible Headquarters Well parking area (where CR62 becomes FR24 on the Caja del Rio of Santa Fe N.F.) along the base of the volcanic escarpment to another good parking area at Dead Dog Well (accessed via the not-so-good Old Buckman Road). Good gates replace some awful cowboy gates, and the views out there are wonderful. A spur trail which was completely re-built a couple years ago switch-backs to the mesa top, so a loop can be ridden if one is competent at route-finding. Plans are to extend the trail north from Dead Dog Well another four miles to Diablo Canyon when money is available.

Please note: This trail is currently closed due to fire dangers. It will re-open when Santa Fe National Forest is able to lift fire closure orders.

Keren Dension, photos by Piar Marks



Above, Karen & Lulu taking advantage of flag training