Using Los Alamos County Open Space

The Los Alamos County Trail Network is open to non-motorized use only.

Resource Protection

All cultural resources such as Ancestral Pueblo room blocks, pot sherds, petroglyphs, and historical artifacts are protected by Federal and State law. Let all cultural resources lie undisturbed.

Share the Trail

These are multi-use trails for pedestrians, equestrians, and bicyclists. Bicyclists should yield to all other users.

Dogs in Los Alamos County Open Space

All dogs must be on a leash when within 100 yards of a trailhead. Dogs must be under voice and sight control at all times.

Safety

When exploring, please stay on marked trails. Always carry water, sunscreen, a hat, extra clothing, a flashlight, and a navigational aid.

Trailhead guides are available at major trailheads, the Los Alamos County Customer Care Center in the Municipal Building, the Los Alamos Chamber of Commerce, and online.

For more information, visit www.losalamosnm.us, then follow the links to Open Space and Trails.
The Los Alamos Ranch School constructed the second system of horse and access trails to and from the ranch around 1918. As part of the “learning by doing” philosophy, students constructed numerous horse trails, many displaying sophisticated dry-laid stone embankments and retaining walls. These trails were used by students of the school for recreational use and to access campsites and other resources nearby.

Things changed in 1943 when the U.S. Army took over the Ranch School and the homesteads to develop the atomic bomb as part of the Manhattan Project. Many of the trails and roads were abandoned or used for access by project personnel. Over the next few years, Los Alamos grew, covering the fields, and the roads and trails disappeared except for the few remaining segments that are now used by hikers, mountain bikers, and equestrians, many of which are unaware of the history that runs beneath them.

LOS ALAMOS HISTORIC ROADS AND TRAILS

Today, stop the mas and running through the deep canyons that comprise the Pajarito Plateau, lie the scattered remains of two early transportation systems carved out of the volcanic tuff by early settlers in the area now known as Los Alamos.

The first of these two systems was developed around 1887 by Hispanic homesteaders in order to gain access to their mesa top homesteads in the spring. In the fall, they used the same roads and trails to return to their winter homes in the Española valley below. Their wagons and livestock created deep ruts in the soft volcanic rock and evidence of their travels can still be seen around Los Alamos to this day.

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All the roads and trails in this guide are located in both the New Mexico and Historical Register of Hispanic Places. Information in this guide is from the applications submitted by Dorothy Hoard to the National Register of Historic Places.