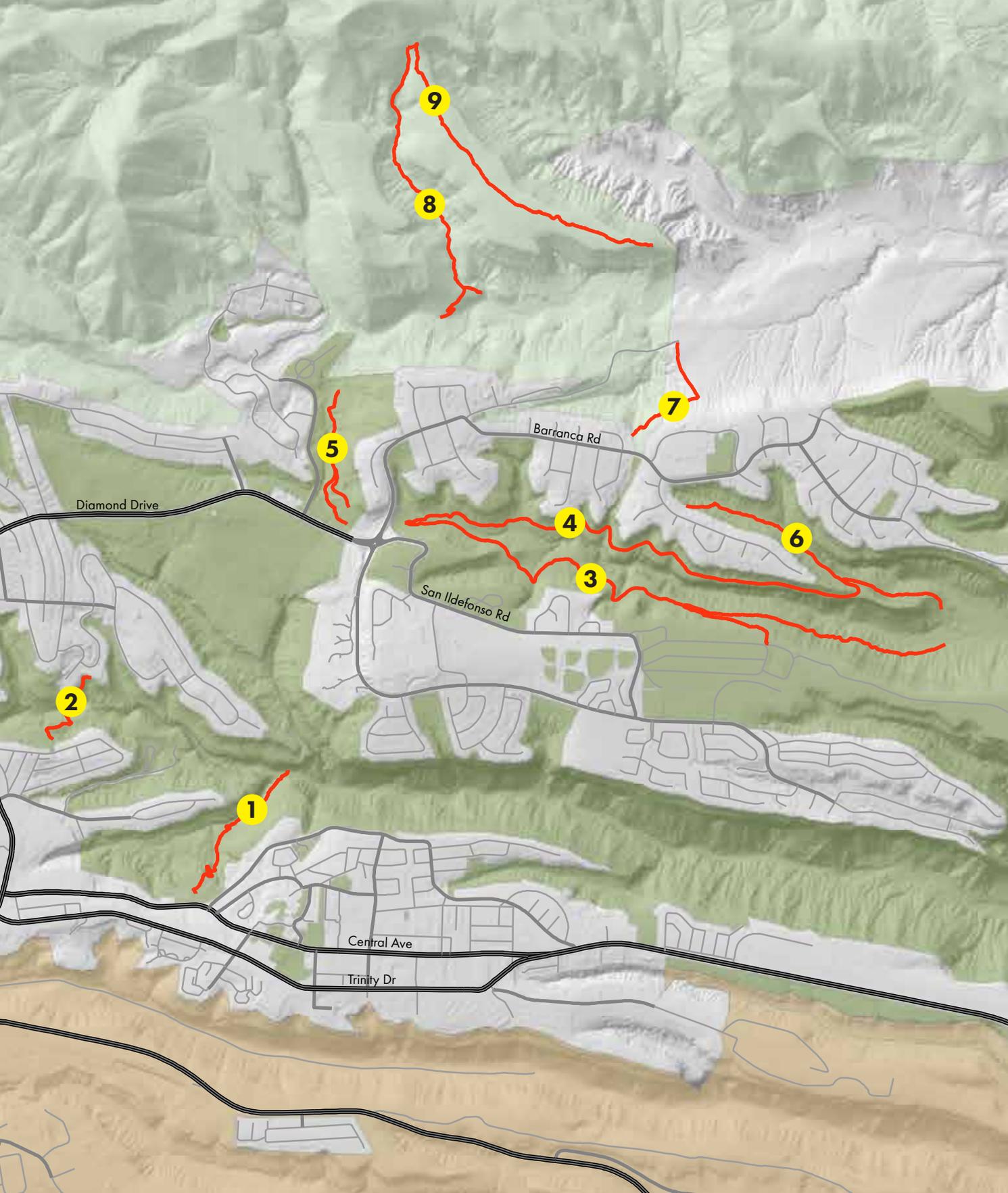


Historic Trails and Roads



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.



LOS ALAMOS HISTORIC ROADS AND TRAILS

Today, atop the mesas 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.

The Los Alamos Ranch School constructed the second network of horse and access trails to and from their campus 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 roads and trails 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.

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



RANCH SCHOOL TRAIL—
35°53'4.649" N
106°18'27.81" W

The Ranch School Trail is thought to have been constructed by students of the Ranch School and was built to access Camp Hamilton in lower Pueblo

Canyon. This trail was different from the more utilitarian roads built by homesteaders in that it was located in an inaccessible, narrow canyon and a ledge had to be constructed to accommodate the trail. The key features of the Ranch School Trail are the intricate dry-stack stone retaining walls that are still visible in some places. The Ranch School Trail may be accessed via the Aquatic Center Trailhead using the Aquatic Center Trailhead guide as a reference.



HOMESTEAD CROSSING—
35°53'33.726" N
106°18'51.114" W

First appearing on maps as a trail in 1915, Homestead Crossing connected the homesteads of the northern mesas with the Ranch School on Los Alamos Mesa and

the homesteads to the south. Only 0.4 of a mile of the original Homestead Crossing exists today. The road was historically 10–13 feet wide and crossed the massive Pueblo Canyon at its shallowest point. Homestead Crossing may be accessed via the Aquatic Center Trailhead using the Aquatic Center Trailhead guide as a reference.



LUJAN ROAD—
35°53'45.06" N
106°16'43.332" W

At a little over 2 miles long, Lujan Road (known today as Bayo Canyon Trail) traverses the south wall of Bayo Canyon, a narrow canyon located between Barranca

and North Mesas. Used between 1913 and 1943, the road provided access to the Martin and Manuel Lujan homesteads located on North Mesa. For approximately 1 mile, Lujan Road ascends the south wall of Bayo Canyon and then continues to follow the level canyon floor to the head of the canyon. The road was originally 10–13 feet wide and was supported by crude stone embankments. There is little evidence of turnouts which suggests the road was not commonly used and that the lack of passing space indicated that travelers did not expect a wagon coming from the opposite direction. Lujan Road can be accessed via the Bayo Canyon Trailhead using the Bayo Canyon Trailhead Guide as a reference.



BAYO CANYON ROAD—
35°53'59.886" N
106°17'26.58" W

Bayo Canyon Road (known today as North Bayo Bench Trail) is just over 2 miles long and traverses the north wall of Bayo Canyon, a narrow canyon located between Barranca

and North Mesas. This road served as a general route to homesteads on Barranca Mesa and the open fields to the west. The route was a difficult trip through the sandy floor of Bayo Canyon and then up the steep push to the mesatop. Bayo Canyon Road appears to have been the general route to the mesas between Pueblo and Rendija Canyons. During the 1940s and up to the 1960s, Bayo Canyon was closed to public use because an explosives detonation area was located at the upper end. Bayo Canyon Road can be accessed via the Bayo Canyon Trailhead using the Bayo Canyon Trailhead Guide as a reference.



GRANT ROAD—
35°54'7.686" N
106°18'2.795" W

Grant Road (known today as Dot Grant Trail) was named after homesteader Offie Oman (Dot) Grant and runs for approximately 3,740 feet. It was the

principal connecting road between Bayo and Rendija canyons which led up from the Rio Grande Valley to homesteads on Barranca Mesa. This road first appeared on the 1913 U.S. Forest Service Maps. It is steep, averages about eight feet wide, and is distinguished by stabilized rock embankments and sections of deeply worn ruts. What remains of the original road is mainly used as a recreational trail today. Grant Road can be accessed via the Bayo Canyon Trailhead using the Bayo Canyon Trailhead Guide as a reference.



GONZALES ROAD—
35°53'49.974" N
106°16'29.334" W

The Gonzales Road is an offshoot of the Bayo Road, traversing the south wall of a small tributary to Bayo Canyon. Near the level eastern end of the road,

homesteaders built a small stockpond. Gonzales Road is slightly over a half mile long and fairly level for all but 400 feet which climbs the side of the mesa at nearly 7 percent. Gonzales Road can be accessed via the Bayo Canyon Trailhead using the Bayo Canyon Trailhead Guide as a reference.



ROYBAL ROAD—
35°54'14.621" N
106°17'4.313" W

Roybal Road (known today as Barranca Crossing) is 2,395 feet in length and provides access from Rendija Canyon Road to Barranca Mesa. Roybal

Road is wider than most homestead roads in the area at 14.5 and 16.5 feet at its widest sections. The first half of the road traverses a level canyon floor while the second half climbs the side of the mesa with a grade of 10 percent. There is one short, steep section with a pitch of 17 percent near the final ascent. Roybal Road can be accessed via the Bayo Canyon Trailhead using the Bayo Canyon Trailhead Guide as a reference.



BEANFIELD NOTCH ROAD—
35°55'33.612" N
106°16'54.449" W

Beanfield Notch Road (known today as Cabra Trail) served the top of Beanfield Mesa which was once

heavily cultivated but abandoned by 1943. The road does not appear on any known map, although some portions are evident in 1935 Soil Conservation Service aerial photos. Beanfield Notch Road can be accessed via the Bayo Canyon Trailhead using the Bayo Canyon Trailhead Guide as a reference.



BEANFIELD MESA ROAD—
35°54'41.597" N
106°17'12.911" W

Beanfield Mesa Road is a short spur off the Rendija Canyon Road north of Los Alamos and served as access

to Beanfield Mesa. This side road is not on any map but portions are barely discernable in 1935 Soil Conservation Service aerial photos. At approximately 1,443 feet in length and 8.5 feet wide, Beanfield Mesa Road is typical of the old homestead roads in that most of the outer embankment was stabilized and built up with crude rockwork. It was however, atypical, because it did not serve any homestead residences. Pick axe marks are still visible on the upper end where the road was hacked from the cliffs. Beanfield Mesa Road can be accessed via the Bayo Canyon Trailhead using the Bayo Canyon Trailhead Guide as a reference.



CAMP HAMILTON TRAIL—
35°52'29.238" N
106°14'51.648" W

The Camp Hamilton Trail is one of the few remaining horse trails built by the boys attending the Los Alamos Ranch

School. Constructed in 1924 to connect the mesa-top Ranch School to a log cabin in Pueblo Canyon, the trail demonstrates the imagination, daring, and skill that exemplified many of the trails built by the Los Alamos Ranch School boys. To create a trail down the mesa-cliff wall, the boys carved out ledges with picks and built fine dry wall embankments to support the trail's many switchbacks. Locating the trail around the mesa's tip required a deep incision into the volcanic tuff to create trough-shaped passages. The view from the trail of the Rio Grande Valley and the Sangre de Cristos is spectacular.