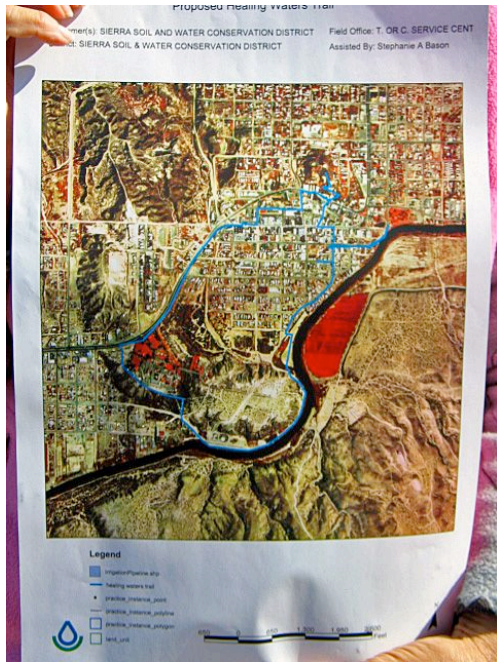
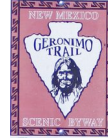


Geronimo Trail Scenic Byway

PLANS AND PROJECTS



Healing Waters Trail Project, Truth or Consequences

Grafton Cabin in Chloride



VII. Plans and Projects

Plans

Plan for Public Participation

Since the completion of the first Corridor Management Plan in 1997 the Advisory Committee has continued to work with the public and to collaborate with local groups in planning and carrying out improvements to the Geronimo Trail National Scenic Byway. Currently there is a desire to increase public participation to assist with education and support of the Byway. Collaboration with the Sierra County Recreation & Tourism Advisory Board to provide training for volunteers will ensure that the GTNSB will be sustained by strong support at the local community level.

The Geronimo Trail Interpretive Center, located next to the Geronimo Springs Museum, is staffed by volunteers and open every week day for questions and comments from visitors. Information about projects along the GTNSB are carried in the press and on the local radio to encourage local involvement and to keep the public informed.

Byway Signage Plan

The Geronimo Trail Advisory Committee in collaboration with the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management and the New Mexico Department of Transportation have installed Geronimo Trail marker signs along the entire length of the Byway and informational signs at rest areas and pullouts along the route. Visitor response to this signage has been positive.

Current public input has requested that the Advisory Committee plan to improve signage by adding information about distances to rest areas and services such as gas and food or to let the traveler know that services such as gas and food may not be available for some miles. Further signage is needed to direct visitors to communities such as Chloride and to historic sites such as cemeteries and the ruins of the old court house in Hillsboro. Another public request is to post signs along the winding road between Kingston and Emory Pass to let drivers know that bicyclists may be on the road. Collaboration with the above mentioned entities will ensure that improved signage will be completed within the next five years.

Byway Marketing Plan

The advent of the Internet age has increased marketability of the Byway tremendously over the last ten years. Stakeholder websites in addition to the National Scenic Byway website, <http://www.byways.org> include information and links that visitors can follow to learn more about the GTNSB. In 2004 the Sierra County Recreation & Tourism Advisory Board was created to focus entirely on promoting tourism in Sierra County. Members of the Geronimo Trail Advisory Committee have become very active with this group. The website, <http://www.sierracountynewmexico.info> includes a link to the GTNSB in addition to providing visitors with contact information to accommodations and destinations along the Byway. Continuing efforts over the next five years will be to keep Byway information linked to this website up to date.

The Geronimo Trail Advisory Committee will keep updated brochures and maps available in the Geronimo Trail Interpretive Center and continue to participate in and distribute brochures about the GTNSB at trade shows and local community events. Familiarization Tours will be offered to local, national and international media in collaboration with the Sierra County Recreation & Tourism Advisory Board.

Byway Interpretive Plan

Driving for pleasure is the most popular outdoor recreational experience for the American public. Visitors to the GTNSB include residents of Southwestern New Mexico, visitors from across the nation, and international tourists. A large number of visitors are repeat visitors who are returning to the region.

Southwestern New Mexico is geographically isolated from major population areas. As a result, while most visitors have visited larger cities in the Southwest (Albuquerque, Santa Fe, El Paso, Tucson), they know very little about the recreational opportunities in this part of New Mexico. They are eager to receive additional information to help orient them to the land and learn about the local and regional history. Most visitors are very appreciative of information, as it allows them to relate to the people and places that make southwestern New Mexico so special. In addition to informational signage that can be found at rest areas and pullouts, signage about Sierra County's relationship with the Apache have been added at ten different sites along the Trail. The Geronimo Springs Museum now has an interpretive center dedicated to the Geronimo Trail and will be adding a representation of an Apache campsite. The historic

Plans and Projects (continued)

mining town of Chloride is currently restoring an old miner's cabin and developing a walk-through interpretive gallery honoring the mining history of the area. Elephant Butte Lake State Park is enhancing a popular birding campground with the addition of interpretive signage and programs.

Interpretive Goals and Management Objectives are:

- To provide information to visitors about the natural and cultural resources on the GTNSB so that they might use this information to better understand and appreciate the land and the resources.
- To increase the public awareness of management activities of the National Forest, Bureau of Land Management, and the State Parks as major providers of outdoor recreation in the American southwest.
- To develop barrier-free facilities to accommodate all people to the GTNSB.
- To utilize a variety of media, including the Geronimo Trail Interpretive Center, wayside exhibits, and brochures to accommodate all visitors.
- To stimulate the economy of Sierra County and surrounding communities in southwest New Mexico.

As sites are identified and interpretive opportunities develop, the Geronimo Trail Advisory Committee would like the public to:

- Enjoy southwest New Mexico, but leave natural and historic sites undisturbed.
- Gain a greater appreciation for the natural and cultural resources of southwest New Mexico.
- Experience a safe stay throughout their trip to southwest New Mexico.

At the present time, thirteen interpretive sites are located along the GTNSB. Several of these have been improved over the last ten years and have become more inviting to visitors.

Location / Description	Adequate Parking	Interpretive Signs	Barrier Free	Amenities
Black Range Ranger Station	Yes	Yes	Yes	Visitor contact facility, Restroom
Lake Valley Town-site	Yes	Yes	Yes	None
Percha Creek pull-off	Yes	Yes	Yes	Trash cans
Hillsboro	No	Yes	Yes	Restroom
Kingston campground	No	Yes	No	Restroom, trash cans, tables
Emory Pass Vista	Yes	Yes	No	Restroom, trash cans, tables, grill, trailhead
Emory Pass pull-off	No	Yes	Yes	Trailhead
Wright's Cabin	Yes	Yes	No	Covered picnic tables, grills, restroom
Iron Creek Campground	Yes	Yes	No	Campsites, tables, restroom, trailhead
Kneeling Nun Vista	No	Missing	No	None
Chloride	Yes	Yes	Yes	Restroom, covered Picnic tables, trash cans
Hwy 59	Yes	Yes	Yes	Restroom
Continental Divide (CDNST)	Yes	No	Yes	Restroom
Beaverhead Work Station	Yes	Yes	No	Visitor contact facility, Restroom

The interpretive theme for the GTNSB can be stated as:

Geologic and climatic processes, some millions of years old, have determined where people settled, traveled, explored, sought their fortune, raised their families, grew crops, built railroads, roads and trails. These have shaped the recreational experiences in southwest New Mexico for the past 10,000 years. The Geronimo Trail National Scenic Byway provides the link to explore this outstanding scenic area through the events and the people that have created the history of this region.

Plan for Accommodating Commercial Traffic

The majority of the GTNSB is on rural roads with little commercial traffic. The St. Cloud Mine in Winston presently runs nine tractor-trailer trucks a day on the Byway from Winston to I-25. There is some commercial traffic between Cuchillo and Truth or Consequences, and between Truth or Consequences and the Hillsboro area. However, the volume of

Plans and Projects (continued)

commercial traffic is very light and the potential for conflicts is minimal. Heavier commercial traffic runs between Truth or Consequences and Elephant Butte. There are many safe places to pull off and enjoy the GTNSB that are safe from other traffic.

Projects

Truth or Consequences

Healing Waters Trail Project

The health and wellness of people and the river corridor inspired a project that will encompass a 3 mile loop in and around the City of Truth or Consequences. Called the Healing Waters Trail this route will include the historic bathhouse district, restored wetlands along the Rio Grande and the Veterans Memorial Park. Project leader is the Sierra Soil and Water Conservation District who is working in collaboration with the City of Truth or Consequences, Sierra County, the Bureau of Reclamation, the City of Elephant Butte and Elephant Butte Lake State Park and the National Park Service. There are also plans to link this project with the Rio Grande Trail.

Cemetery Brochure

A brochure will be created for GTNSB visitors that will include a map showing the location of cemeteries off of the Byway, location of the gravesites of infamous persons and their stories.

Completion of Apache Campsite at Geronimo Trail Visitor & Interpretive Center

An area of the patio behind the Geronimo Trail Visitor & Interpretive Center will be dedicated to a representation of an Apache campsite. Research of what this will include is ongoing. At this time there will be an Apache style wickiup, some tools and items which would have been used in an Apache "home".

Elephant Butte

Continued Landscaping

The City of Elephant Butte has begun a Beautification program that has established a walking path along Hwy 195 and several areas of natural landscaping. Further plans include continued landscaping along the walking path as well as the intersection of Hwy 195 and Warm Springs Rd. (Hwy 171) and south on Hwy 171 to the entrance of the Turtle Mountain Resort and Sierra del Rio Golf Course.

CCC Statue & Plaque at Damsite Recreation Area

Located off of Hwy 51, the Damsite Recreation area provides visitors with boating access to Elephant Butte Lake, a picnic area called Winding Roads and a restaurant. Damsite has recently received a facelift and further plans include the addition of a 6' bronze statue honoring the CCC enrollees who built the Dam Site Recreation Area. The statue will be located in the parking lot island with an informational plaque.

Elephant Butte Lake State Park

Create Interpretive Program at Paseo del Rio

Paseo del Rio is located off of Hwy 51 heading east toward Engle. Elephant Butte Lake State Park has applied for funds to enhance the Paseo del Rio Campground with more adequate parking and an Interpretive Center. This center would provide a space for hosting interpretive events and educational programs about the Rio Grande and about the area's history and natural resources. The Center will include informational displays and a space for observing birds and local wildlife. The Center would incorporate the history of the fish hatchery and the adjacent hatchery ponds.

Restoration of fish hatchery

The old fish hatchery located at the end of Paseo del Rio Campground is part of the National Register Historic District. Elephant Butte Lake State Park has plans to restore the building to its original appearance and create an educational center about the purpose of the hatchery in the past. A Park Ranger would assist with interpreting this area through programming and trail signs.

Improving Existing Hiking Trails

Trails at Elephant Butte Lake State Park provide visitors with

educational and interpretive opportunities. Two trails are accessible from the GTNSB. The Luchini Trail is located just off Hwy 195 and runs 1.6 miles. Plans for this trail include an amphitheater that is ADA compliant, self-guided interpretive signs and an improved trailhead. A second trail accessible to the GTNSB is located at the Paseo del Rio Campground. This trail is .75 miles long and runs along the Rio Grande. Future plans to develop this trail include biking, hiking, horseback riding and ADA-accessibility.

Upgrade Visitor's Center

The Elephant Butte Lake Visitor Center is located at the entrance gate off Hwy 195. The current visitor center is too small to accommodate the large amount of visitors that come to the Lake. The displays and informational boards are old and outdated. A new visitor center is planned and will include the following services:

- new and updated interpretive displays and information;
- an educational classroom area;
- a trailhead for a new integrated trail system;
- an amphitheater;
- a combination bookstore and gift shop;
- expand internet connectivity access for the public; and
- administrative facilities for park management and staff.

The Visitor Center plan will be incorporated with a larger development plan to include the construction of a better entrance station, designed to ease the flow of traffic into the Lake.

Rio Grande Trail Project

The National Park Service is in the process of developing a state-long trail that will run along the Rio Grande Corridor. The southern portion of this trail will run through Sierra County will be accessible from the GTNSB. Signage will be planned to guide interested visitors to trailheads. The Rio Grande Trail Project is still in the planning and development stage but will be well along within the next five years.

Hillsboro

Court House Restoration

Hillsboro was the original county seat for Sierra County until 1937 when the county seat was moved to Hot Springs . The remains of the old court house and jail sit on private property and has been victim to vandalism and time. In 2007 the site was classified as one of 10 most endangered sites in New Mexico. When the owner expressed interest in selling the property the community of Hillsboro established an Historical Society and started raising funds to purchase the site. The Historical Society has recently applied for 501c3 status and plans to continue fundraising.

Purchasing the property is the first step toward protecting this precious piece of Sierra County's history.

Monticello (side trip destination)

The community of Monticello is an important side trip of the GTNSB as a beautiful example of an historic Hispanic village. Members of the community are dedicated to its preservation and have established a non-profit organization called the Monticello Canyon Association. This Association provides the means to apply for funds for preservation projects and to provide a more powerful voice when fighting for the protection of their land and water issues. There are several projects in progress at this time. They include:

- Refurbish the Plaza, create a sign board showing the map of the town and telling the history and use of the buildings.
- Upgrade the water system
- Clean up the old cemetery and document gravesites
- Restore the Old School House and create a community center
- Oral history project documenting the stories of the village elders

Cuchillo

Planning & Development of Rest Area

There is a need for a rest area in the community of Cuchillo, to include restrooms. The Geronimo Trail Advisory Committee will support future plans for a rest area.

Restoration of Cuchillo Store / Bar

The historic Cuchillo Store & Bar experienced a fire in 2000 that closed down the store. The Bar remained open until 2003. The new owner has plans to preserve the history of the area by restoring the building and opening a museum, a micro brewery and a small gallery space.

Plans and Projects (continued)

Chloride

Completion of Mining Interpretive Gallery

In 2006 an old miner's cabin was returned to Sierra County after residing for years in Las Cruces. The cabin was originally from Grafton but as that mining town no longer exists, Chloride asked to make the cabin a part of their community. The exterior has been restored and plans are underway to involve Sierra County students in researching the history of the seven little mining towns that had existed when silver was actively being mined. Informational displays will be developed around the students' research and the cabin will become an additional visitor

destination as a museum to the mining district.

Food Service in Chloride

At this time, unless visitors bring up their own picnic lunch, the only place to purchase food this far on Hwy 52 is the Winston Store. The old bank building in Chloride is being restored and will be completed late 2008. Plans for the building will make it available to someone who is interested in providing a type of small café or bakery. Food service in Chloride would provide a boost to visitor numbers and the amount of travelers on the GTNSB.

Restoration of Cassie Hobbs House

Cassie Hobbs was a long-time resident of Chloride and a pioneer woman who made everything she and her family needed to exist. Her home and workshop still stand, full of many of her handmade treasures. There is a desire to set up a museum to honor her memory, her skills and her beautiful work. One idea is to invite a Women's organization to help sponsor this project and to assist with raising funds toward restoration of the buildings.

Hwy 152

Wright's Cabin

Wright's Cabin is a small picnic area with restrooms and covered tables. There are no longer any plans to phase out this picnic site. A new toilet is planned and possibly a sign board explaining the history of the area and how it got its name.

Plans and Projects (continued)

Railroad Trailhead

Railroad Trailhead provides an important trail access point into the Aldo Leopold Wilderness. The site currently has a toilet and one picnic table. There are plans to improve the current signage.

Lower Gallinas Canyon Campground

There are two separate sites: Upper Gallinas and Lower Gallinas. Both are semi-developed camping areas with three toilets and a few scattered picnic tables. Lower Gallinas will receive a face lift in 2008 with a few new tables and fire rings / grills.

Hwy 59

The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDNST)

The CDNST crosses NM 59. Just past this junction a turnout and restroom have been established as a trailhead. A small campground is planned at this site as a collaborative effort

between the Forest Service, the New Mexico Volunteers for the Outdoors and the Continental Divide Trail Alliance. Plans include parking for horse trailers, campsites and three tent / car campsites.



Restoration of old bank building, Chloride.