

## Beclabito Community Trail Network:

### *A model trail on the Northern Navajo Nation*

The Beclabito Community Trail Network is (as of January 2020) an 8-mile system of trails in the Beclabito Chapter. The network, which was initiated in 2019, is unique in many ways and serves as a model for trail development on the Navajo Nation.

The project was initiated by local residents, the chapter manager and the nonprofit NavajoYES, all of whom saw the benefits of a trail system in the community. The concept was taken to the chapter officials, CLUP Committee and to the full chapter, where the effort was overwhelmingly supported. The trail team worked with an archaeologist to do a Navajo cultural resources inventory, consulted with Navajo Fish & Wildlife and met with trail design experts. The project was developed under the guidance of the Navajo Trails Task Force, and in alignment with the Navajo Trails Template (a document developed by the Division of Natural Resources and the nonprofit NavajoYES in 2015.) In summer 2019, the dreams came to reality and trail work commenced on the first phase of the Beclabito Community Trail Network.



The Beclabito Community Trail Network is currently comprised of four segments. The route is very scenic, and includes some iconic landmarks among its sites: Carrizo Mountains, Shiprock Pinnacle, Beclabito Dome, Sleeping Ute Mountain, Mesa Verde, Chuska Mountains and the San Juan Mountains/Tsisnajiini

- Troy O. Tom Trail, which is a singletrack route from Beclabito Baptist Church to the Beclabito Express gas station
- Bobcat Trail, which runs from the store to the Beclabito Day School
- Wild Horse Loop, which is a 3.3 -mile trail looping between through two valleys and through a narrow cut in Bruised Ridge
- An as-of-yet unnamed route connects the Bobcat Trail near the Day School to the Wild Horse Loop on a beautiful route that traverses the Beclabito springs and passes through the canyon below

The route has some very distinguishing features that make it a stellar and popular trail, but also a good site to visit to learn about various elements of trail development, design and construction. Consider these features:

- The route is primarily singletrack, suitable for trail running, hiking and mountain biking.
- One segment is a Safe Route to School pathway, essentially a natural surface sidewalk from the local NHA housing neighborhood to the Beclabito Day School.
- A unique feature is a trail segment that is on an NTUA waterline right-of-way. (Chapter officials and trail crew met with NTUA staff to insure that this was a viable option and to learn of how NTUA wanted this trail section to be completed.)
- Many events are held on the trails, including a competitive 10K, community fun run, Christmas luminaria walk, bike race and more.
- Beclabito Day School and Beclabito Baptist Church are each located at trailheads of the system, and both entities utilize the trail in a variety of activities and events.
- The trail is a good example of some of the various features that can included on a trail. For example, the system includes six (6) ramadas/shade structures, four (4) grills, five (5) picnic tables, numerous benches, pedestals with trail maps, trail signage and trail posts, and much more.



The community has plans to extend the trail network in the near future and to host more community-based events and activities on various segments of the trail. For communities interested in developing trails in their community, Beclabito Community Trail Network is a good place to visit and study. There are a variety of trail elements that are well represented on this system and the chapter and NavajoYES folks are most willing to give you a good look at the trail. You can contact chapter manager Lenora Robinson at (928) 656-3265 or Tom with NavajoYES at (928) 429-0345 or at [chuskaman@yahoo.com](mailto:chuskaman@yahoo.com) if you are interested in a site visit.