

The Los Alamos Trails Management Program - The Path Forward in an Era of Interagency Collaboration

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Abstract

Public trails use at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) is considered to be one of the benefits available to workers and residents of the Pajarito Plateau. However, there was never an explicit policy or mechanism to balance recreational trails use with environmental, cultural, safety, security and social regulations and concerns at the 40 square-mile site.

The LANL Trails Management Program and Trails Working Group were established in 2003 to address resource and operational issues through improved and more active stewardship of trails. The program was initiated as a mitigation action in an environmental assessment prepared earlier that year by the Department of Energy/National Nuclear Security Administration (DOE/NNSA). The Working Group includes representatives from adjacent Federal land management agencies and Pueblo governments, Los Alamos County, the Los Alamos Site Office of the DOE/NNSA, and the Laboratory. It continues to meet monthly.

Many of the trails at the Laboratory have now been mapped and resource considerations have been documented, historical reports have prepared by local citizen experts, and studies were completed relating to potential release sites. Some trails have been closed to the public in order to protect irreplaceable resources. A means to allow the use of volunteers to maintain specific trails was established. Worker and Public Safety Measures have been identified in studies showing the location of potential release sites, and through closure actions where conditions warrant. Cultural sites have been protected. Linkages to trails crossing jurisdictions have been improved.

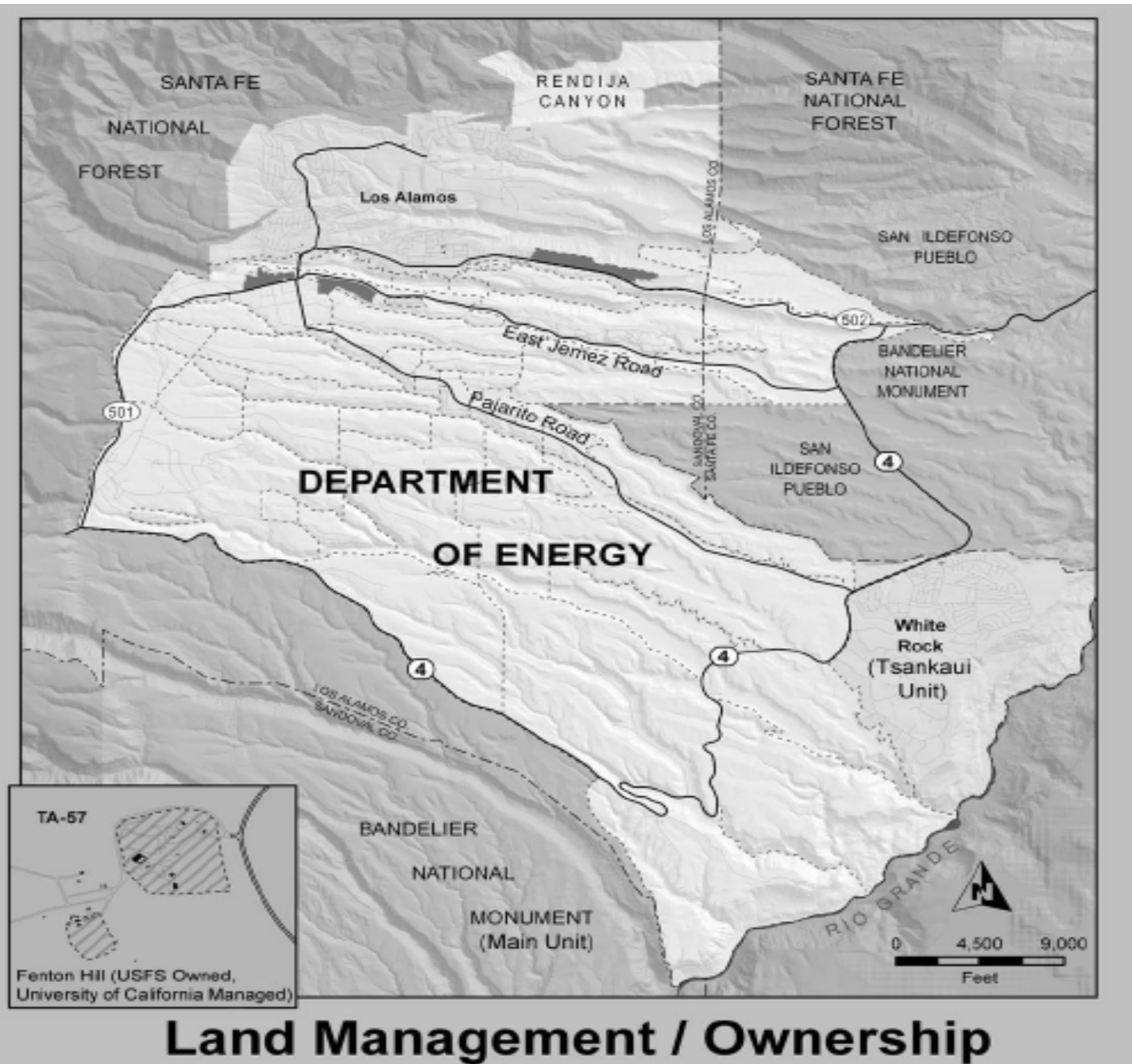
The Trails Management Program at LANL is an example of low-cost and successful hands-on interagency collaboration that is part of our DOE/NNSA sustainability efforts.



LANL is multi-programmatic national laboratory that is part of the DOE/NNSA

LANL is located in Northern New Mexico about 35 miles from Santa Fe.

It abuts Pueblo lands, private land and other federal lands - administered by the NPS, and USFS



LANL Overview

20,000 residents in Los Alamos County

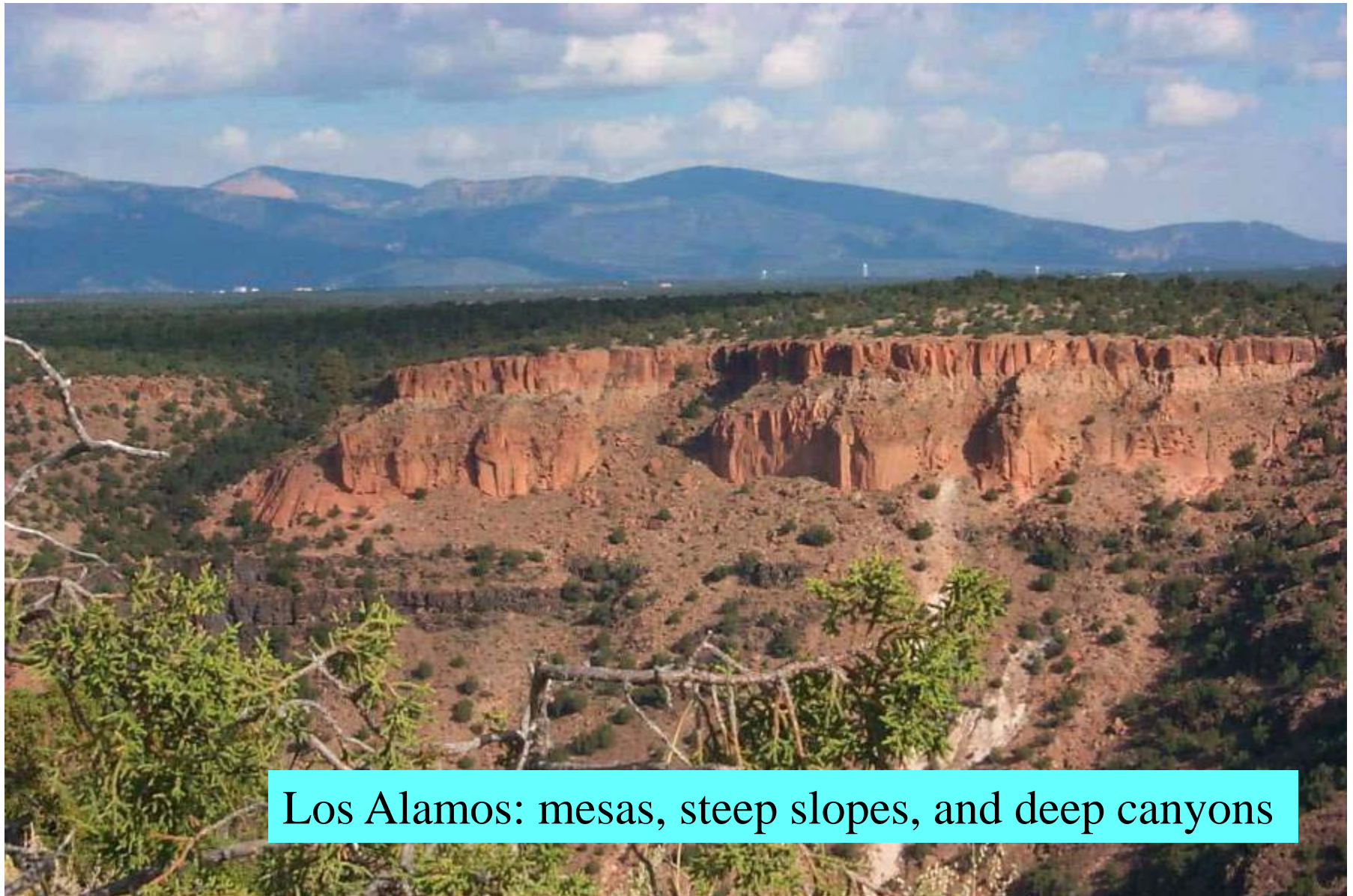
Over 12,000 employed at LANL - more than half live "off the hill"

40 square miles

Population at LANL mostly concentrated in few major areas

Mostly auto-centric/dependent but opportunities for other modes

Trail Use Seen as a Benefit of Living and Working Here



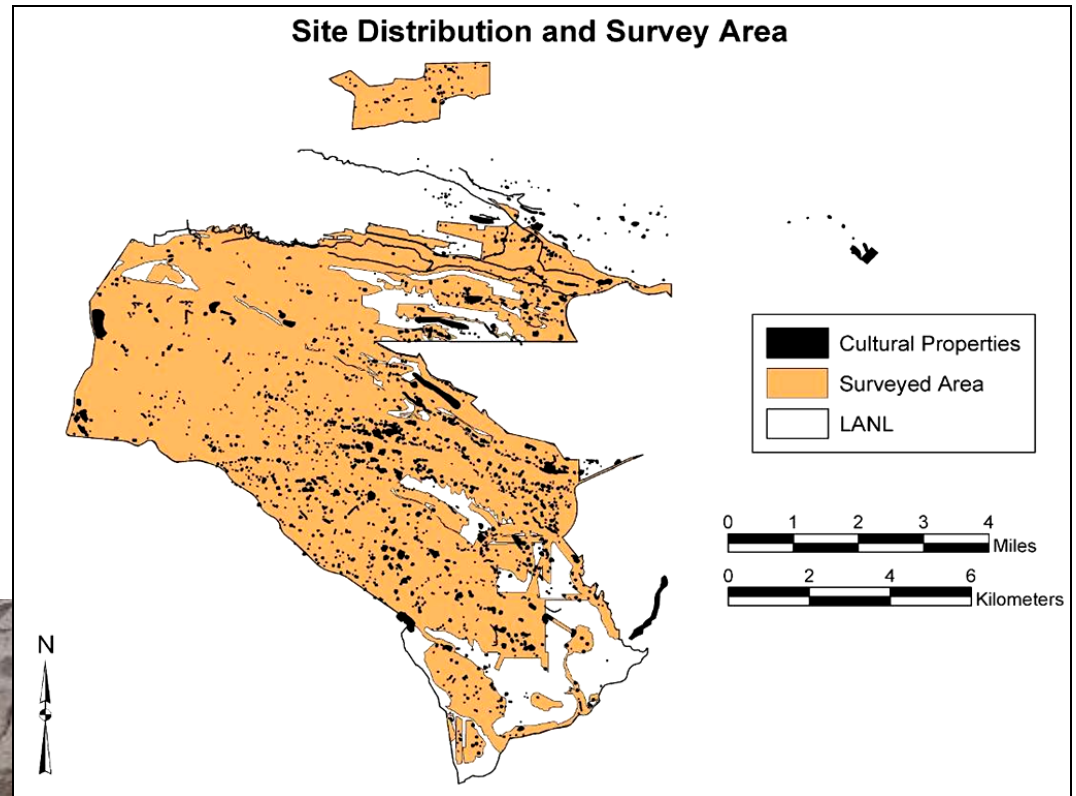
Los Alamos: mesas, steep slopes, and deep canyons

Los Alamos National Laboratory is responsible for management of more than 2000 historic properties spanning more than 5500 years.









Mexican Spotted Owls in Canyons

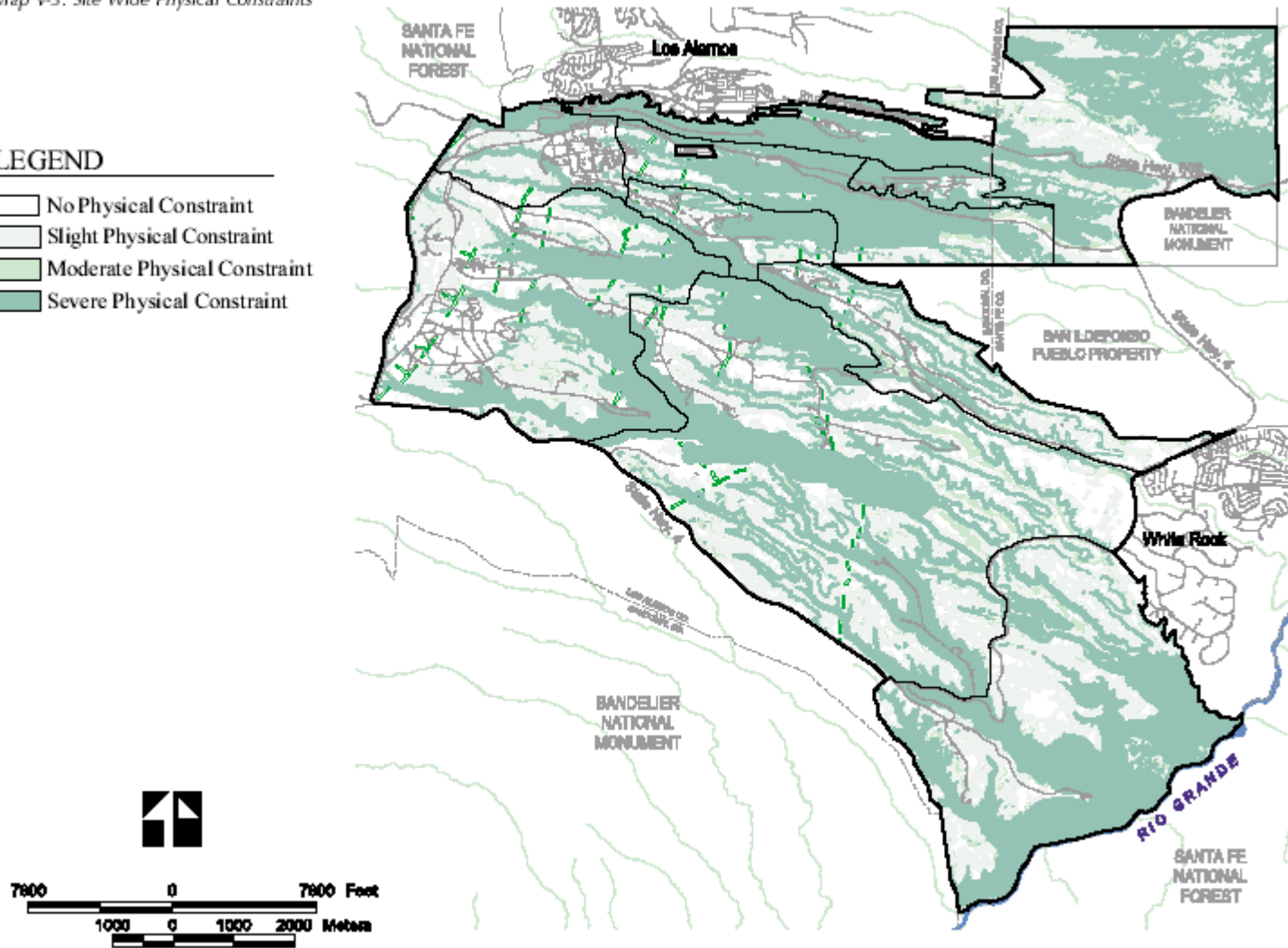


Cultural Sites on Canyon Walls & Mesa Tops

Map V-3: Site Wide Physical Constraints

LEGEND

-  No Physical Constraint
-  Slight Physical Constraint
-  Moderate Physical Constraint
-  Severe Physical Constraint



Much of the land at LANL is undeveloped/undevelopable (darker green)

Trails Use Runs Deep!



- Programmatic EA in 2003
- 150 Public Comments
- Mitigation Action Plan Established Trails Management Program
- Trails Assessment Working Group Has Met 70 Times

Trails Management Program

5 Goals

Reduce the risk of damage and injury to property, human life, and health, and sensitive natural and cultural resources from social trail use at LANL

Facilitate the establishment of a safe, viable network of linked trails across the Pajarito Plateau that traverse land holdings of various private and government entities for recreational use and for alternate transportation purposes without posing a threat to DOE and NNSA mission support work at LANL or disrupting LANL operations.

Maintain the security of LANL operations.

Respect the wishes of local Pueblos to maintain access to traditional cultural properties (TCPs) by Pueblo members while also preventing unauthorized public access to adjacent Pueblo lands and other lands identified as both religious and culturally sensitive areas to Native American communities.

Adapt trail use at LANL to changing conditions and situations in a responsive manner. Maintain the recreational functionality of the DOE lands so that the land owned by the DOE remains open to all members of the public for non-motorized recreation, in compliance with federal laws and LANL operational constraints.

Trails Working Group Participation



Pajarito Riding Club



Trails Management Program Accomplishments

- Enhanced and Effective Communication Among Federal Agencies, Tribes, County and Other Local Organizations (building relationships)
- Trails Closed and Rerouted to Protect Cultural Sites and Core Habitat
- Trails Repaired and Maintained by Volunteers
- Uniform Signs Posted at Trailheads
- We are Meeting Our 5 Goals While Doing This!

Before: "Re-Signed" to Confusion!





Now:

The Result of
Interagency
Collaboration is
Functional Trails by
“De Sign”

*You are welcome to
use the trail but be
nice, no firearms,
collecting, camping
and so on...*

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