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12-7-2017

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# Grants Kicks Off Relationship with National Park Service

December 7, 2017

The City of Grants held a kick-off meeting this week to determine the direction of its relationship with the National Park Service (NPS). Grants was awarded a year or more of technical assistance from the NPS through its Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) Program. The RTCA Program carries out the NPS mission by supporting community-led outdoor recreation and conservation projects for the benefit of all Americans. The community plans to leverage assistance from the program to develop trails in the Grants Ridge area along Lobo Canyon Road to the northeast of town. Local leaders' other goal is to put together a master trails plan for the city and surrounding area. "We could get something out there that could build some synergy, some excitement, and then do a master plan," suggested City Manager Laura Jaramillo. Chad Gaines, a local resident, has already walked and GPSed one section of Grants Ridge that he hopes will be the start of a network of stacked loop multi-use trails. Grants Ridge is within the Cibola National Forest's Mount Taylor Ranger District. The district is enthusiastic about developing these trails because it would provide a scenic place to walk and ride that's relatively close to town. To make it even more accessible, local leaders would like to create a separated multi-use path that runs parallel to Lobo Canyon Road connecting the trails with the city, about five miles to the southwest. Lobo Canyon Road currently has only soft shoulders that are less than ideal for walking or cycling on. Another piece of the puzzle is to connect nearby Coal Mine Campground.

There are currently no trails leading to or from the campground. Local leaders hope that their relationship with the National Park Service and the projects that come from it will enhance the area's burgeoning outdoor recreation economy by creating new and diverse opportunities for recreation. The City will also work with the NPS and other partners to use these opportunities as a way to engage local residents, especially youth, as an avenue to increase physical activity and improve community health.