

SLV

Wednesday, June 7, 2023

Lifestyles

Serving the entire San Luis Valley

Supplement to The Monte Vista Journal, Center Post-Dispatch, The Conejos County Citizen, The Mineral County Miner, The South Fork Times, and The Del Norte Prospector.

BOXHOLDER LOCAL-RURAL CAR-RT SORT STANDARD MAIL RATE U.S. Postage PAID
Permit No. 70 Alamosa, CO 81101

Proposed trail network in Saguache County gets a boost with a new path on national wildlife refuge

BY JOHN WATERS

SAGUACHE COUNTY — A new one-mile hiking trail at the Baca National Wildlife Refuge is now open. The trail can be accessed from the Colorado College Road near Crestone and when the wildlife refuge road to the visitor center is open from that area as well.

During June, the Baca Refuge Visitor Center will be open from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Friday and Saturday. On June 10, the visitor center will close at noon.

The visitor center has interactive displays that detail the recovery efforts the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has implemented for the Rio Grande sucker and the Gunnison's prairie dog that reside on the refuge.

Dani Robben with San Luis Valley Great Outdoors (SLV GO!), who led a hike along the

Baca Nature and Heritage Trail on May 13 as part of an open house on the refuge told the Valley Courier the trail has been in the planning stages for several years and is part of a larger trail.

"In 2016 the Crestone Trails and Outdoor Open Space recreation plan was developed by the City of Crestone and that is when SLV Go! became involved and we convened the San Luis Valley Trails Coalition," she said.

The trail will eventually extend an additional mile to the Crestone Kiosk and is part of a plan the

Please see TRAIL on Page 2

Dani Robben with San Luis Valley Great Outdoors (SLV GO!) leads a hike on the new Baca Nature and Heritage Trail during an open house on the refuge on May 13.

Photo by John Waters



screening done to see if the adult would qualify. Wolfe said that despite the screening, the agency is non-income based and qualifies adults on a needs-only basis.

TRAIL

Continued from Page 1 —

Eastern San Luis Valley Trail Coalition is working on. Ideally, an unbroken trail will connect the Baca National Wildlife Refuge, Colorado College Baca Campus, Crestone Charter School, Baca Grande Subdivision, and the Town of Crestone. The trail will offer non-motorized, multi-use recreation opportunities, according to Robben.

The 93,000-acre Baca National Wildlife Refuge was established in 2004 on what was the Baca Grant Ranch and is a diverse combination of shrublands, grasslands, wet meadows, playa wetlands, and riparian areas. The refuge was set aside as a haven for migratory and resident wildlife, and also as an important piece in a broader conservation effort to protect the wildlife, habitat, and water of the north and eastern portions of the San Luis Valley. The refuge is a great place to view elk in the fall.

In describing the enthusiasm, the proposed network of trails has garnered, Robben said, "That is a special and unique characteristic of the Crestone community."