



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

National Trails  
Intermountain Region  
PO Box 728  
Santa Fe, NM 87504-0728

Phone: 505-988-6098  
Fax: 505-988-5214

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## National Trails Intermountain Region News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Kimberly Finch, Kimberly\_Finch@nps.gov, 801-741-1012 x 121

### Stage is Set for New University of New Mexico Student Opportunities with the National Park Service

SANTA FE, New Mexico: In April, the Provost Office of the University of New Mexico and the National Park Service's National Trails Intermountain Region signed a five-year Memorandum of Understanding that will set the stage for a new era of cooperation between the federal agency and the Albuquerque-based university.

This cooperative effort provides benefits for the National Trails office and students and faculty at the university. Student development and training through internships, grants, thesis and dissertation projects, and independent studies will support a variety of career opportunities for graduates as they enter the workforce. Projects will also allow the National Trails office and the university to exchange technical expertise and best practices across a variety of fields including geography, history, Latin American studies, planning, and landscape architecture through a real world experience with a federal agency.

NPS Superintendent Aaron Mahr remarked that "The cooperative experiences we are building with UNM have the power to be life or career-changing. Students that participate will have a great advantage over their peers in the job market. The memorandum of understanding will also assist the university and faculty in leveraging grant or project funding."

As a result of the MOU, the university has provided the National Trails office with two offices in Hokona Hall on the UNM campus. And the NTIR has a dedicated staff member, Dr. Angélica Sánchez-Clark, stationed there to coordinate and direct student opportunities and faculty partnerships under the MOU. History Professor and Associate Provost for Faculty Development, Dr. Virginia Scharff will provide faculty leadership for coordinating collaborative projects between UNM and the National Trails office.

National Trails Intermountain Region administers nine national historic trails that cross portions of 26 states, and the Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program. Route 66 and three of these trails – El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro, Old Spanish, and Santa Fe national historic trails – are located in

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New Mexico. The National Trails Intermountain Region also has offices in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and Salt Lake City, Utah.

For more information about this new agreement, please contact Dr. Virginia Scharff at (505) 277-7119; Aaron Mahr, in Santa Fe (see above); or Angélica Sánchez-Clark at the University of New Mexico (505-346-2890).

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*About the National Park Service. More than 20,000 National Park Service employees care for America's 401 national parks and work with communities across the nation to help preserve local history and create close-to-home recreational opportunities. Learn more at [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov).*