



COURTESY OF JENNY BLACKMORE

A crew with New Mexico Volunteers for the Outdoors and the Continental Divide Trail Coalition reroutes the CDT in the Black Range of the Gila National Forest. The 1.5 miles of new trail will take the route off of a Forest Service road.

# A needed detour

## NM volunteers reroute portion of Continental Divide Trail

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Outdoor enthusiasts can now hike a brand new section of the Continental Divide Trail in the Gila National Forest.

The New Mexico Volunteers for the Outdoors partnered with the Continental Divide Trail Coalition earlier in October to reroute part of the trail in the forest's Black Range west of Truth or Consequences.

Jenny Blackmore, chairperson for New Mexico Volunteers for the Outdoors, said the 1.5 miles of new trail will take the Continental Divide Trail off of a dirt Forest Service road.

The crew worked for six days, using a technique called "benching" to make a passable trail in the difficult terrain.

"Because the trail is going along a steep slope, it involves cutting a lot of soil and rock out of the side of the slope to create the trail and then refining it with other tools and making it less bumpy," Blackmore said.

A Youth Conservation Corps crew completed about half the trail before the volunteers took over.

Before the trail construction could even begin, the crew planted flags in the ground to map out the trail route, and cleared out vegetation along the planned path.

NMVFO also worked with the Continental Divide Trail Coalition last year for a maintenance project on the CDT in the middle fork of the Gila.

Improved trails boost the recreation economies of small towns in New Mexico, Blackmore said, and build an appreciation for the outdoors.

"The more trails and the more easier-to-travel trails that we have, the more people will get outside," Blackmore said. "The more people who get outside and fall in



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love with wilderness, that means more people who will step up to help protect wild areas."

The groups also do smaller-scale trail maintenance throughout New Mexico, removing dead trees and planting willows. Visit [nmvfo.org](http://nmvfo.org) or [continentaldividetrail.org](http://continentaldividetrail.org) to learn about upcoming projects.