# Sandia Ranger District Emerging from Covid

**Renewing Connections** 

# **Back Together Again**

Emerging from a pandemic, and growing!

### Crystal Powell, District Ranger Updates

- Our growing staff
- Back to the Office
- Restoration Project Implementation
- Projects in Planning

### Julie Padilla, Acting Deputy Ranger Updates

- Recreation Project Updates
- Community Engagement
- Public Information
- Partnerships

### Back at the Office



 Staffing increased to support national priorities

Office and Workshop Reorganization

Some have a better view



### **Restoration Projects Updates**

#### Sandia Hazard Tree and Thinning Project

- Cedro Landscape Restoration
  - Cedro 3 and 4
- Cedro Creek Restoration
- Prescribed Burn Projects



# Projects in Planning

La Madera Fuels Reduction
Foothills Trail Project Planning
Heli-base Modernization

Invasives treatment plan - Cedro



# Recreation, Community Engagement, Visitor Information and Partnerships

Julie Padilla, Acting Deputy Ranger



### Recreation Project Updates

- Nine Mile Picnic Area
- Sandia Crest Recreation Area
- Juan Tabo and La Cueva Picnic Areas
- Sandia Cave Improvements
- Trail Program Updates
- Downhill Mountain Bike Trails
- New Fee Implementation



### Nine Mile Picnic Area

- A beautiful site nestled in the aspen trees
- Construction this summer
- Fully accessible site
- Trail Head parking to access the Challenge Trail
- New picnic tables, restrooms and amenities
- Awarded \$850,000 through the Great American Outdoors Act

### Sandia Crest Recreation Area

- Construction anticipated
   next summer
- Awarded a total of \$3.6 through the Great American Outdoors Act
- Updating all Amenities

### Juan Tabo and La Cueva Picnic Areas

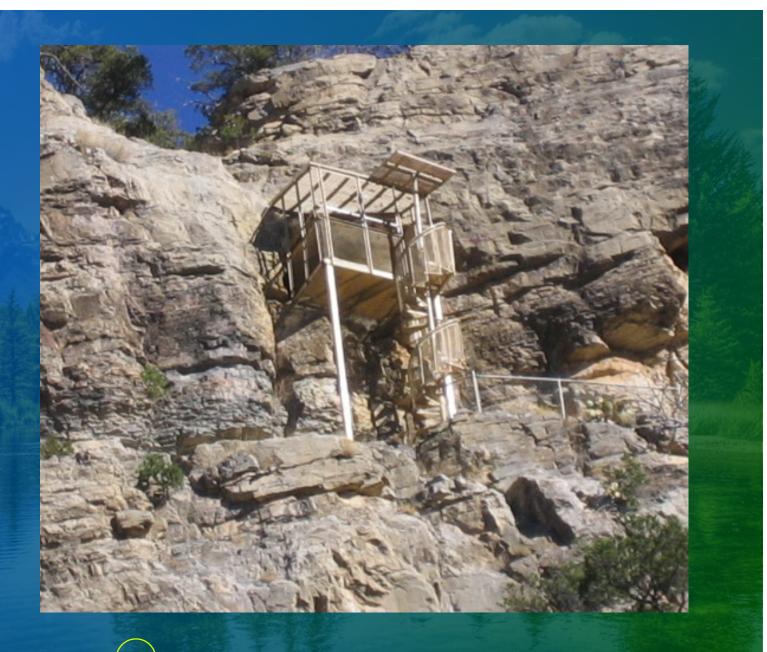
- Currently working through design options in consultation with Sandia Pueblo that would:
  - update aging infrastructure
  - protect the site from vandalism
  - increase accessibility
- Appling for funding through the Great American Outdoors Act

### Sandia Cave Improvement Project

### Project includes four main components:

- 1. Parking Lot Redesign
- 2. Trail and Trail Features
- 3. Replacement of spiral staircase
- 4. Site interpretation

Project will likely be phased and partial funding has been awarded



### Trail Updates



#### Volunteers Make it Happen!

FOSM Thursday Crew > FOSM Monday Crew > NM Volunteers for the Outdoors > 505 Cycling > Placitas Area Trails Association > Sandia Nordic Ski Club > The National Interscholastic Cycling Association > Albuquerque Mountain Bike Association >

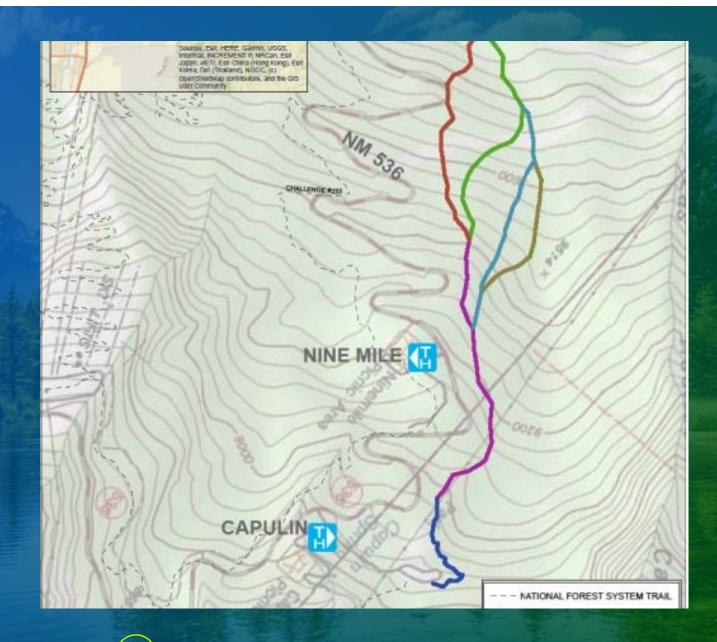
#### Accomplishments

- Placitas area trails ~95% complete thanks to PATA and FOSM
- Completed construction of Road Noise trail
- ~90% complete on the challenge extension
- ~90% complete on groomed Nordic ski trails Future focus
- Complete work for Cedro area, and finishing the Sandia Trails Improvement Project focusing on Downhill Mountain Bike Trails



### Downhill Mountain Bike Trails Project

- Part of the Sandia Trails Improvement
   Project
- Partnership with Albuquerque Mountain Biking Association
- Another awardee of the NM State
   Outdoor Recreation Division's Trails+
   grant
- Two year grant that began this year
- Will be an exclusive Mountain Bike use



### New Fee Implemented

- Four New Mexico Forests sought input on increasing fees in 2021 and 2022
- Fee Proposal went before the Resource Advisory Council and was recently approved
- Regional Office is anticipated to provide the final approval
- Fees will be increased in group areas and Picnic Areas and Trail Heads will increase from \$3 to \$5
- New Enchantment Pass anticipated to be offered for \$40 or 24 volunteer hours



## Community Engagement: Public Gatherings

- National Public Lands Day
- National Trails Day
- District Open House Coming Soon
- Volunteer Appreciation Event







## Community Engagement: Environmental Education

#### **Developing a vision**

- Over one third of New Mexico's school age children live withing an hour's drive of the Sandia Mountains – not just for children!
- Many of our management approaches identified in the Cibola National Forest Land Management Plan focus on public education and outreach as an important management approach
- Many of our partners are delivering high quality programs, how can we work together?

#### **District Educational Goals**

- Wildfire prevention
- Forest health
- Protection of Endangered Species
- Interacting with wildlife
- Sharing knowledge about what we do
- Understanding impacts from a changing climate
- Understanding our rich cultural heritage and protecting archaeological resource
- Encouraging land stewardship and inspiring new conservationists
- Expanding our workforce

# Working Together

**Public Lands Interpretive Association** 

• Sandia Junior Ranger Booklet



- Forest Health and Fire Prevention field programs with Middle School students
- APS Every Kid Outdoor Program
   Talking Talons Youth Leadership
- Curious Coyotes Club connecting youth to climate issues
- Youth crew

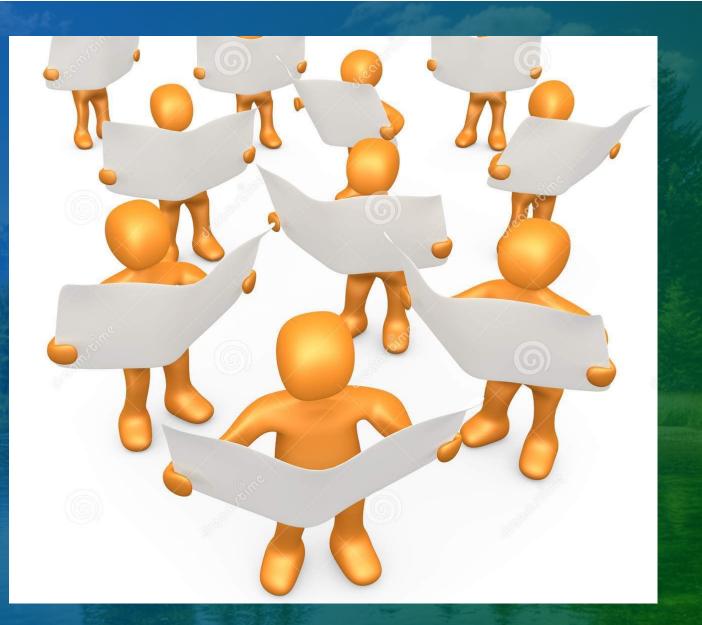
#### Friends of Tijeras Pueblo

- Interpretation for visiting public and school groups
- Summer camp program

Seeking to expand and support programs with FOSM, Ciudad Soil and Water, Sandia Mountain Natural History Center, Youth Corps and others

## Public Information

- New Sandia Visitor Map Coming Soon
- New resource guides for La Luz Trail Head and the Manzanita Mountains
- New Kiosk Signs
- New Pocket Guide
- New trail decals
- Other misc. signage



# Random Info

Douglas Fire Tussock Moth informationDavid Canyon Prescribed Burn(RX) VideoReimagine Recreation National StrategyNational Trails Strategy10 Yr CHallenge

# THANKYOU!

### **Contact Information**

Crystal Powell Cell: 505-225-4062, <u>crystal.Powell@usda.gov</u> Julie Padilla, cell: 505-933-0711, Julie.padilla@usda.gov

# QUESTIONS?