



# **COTTONWOOD GULCH EXPEDITIONS**

**2019 Annual Report**

**October 23, 2019**

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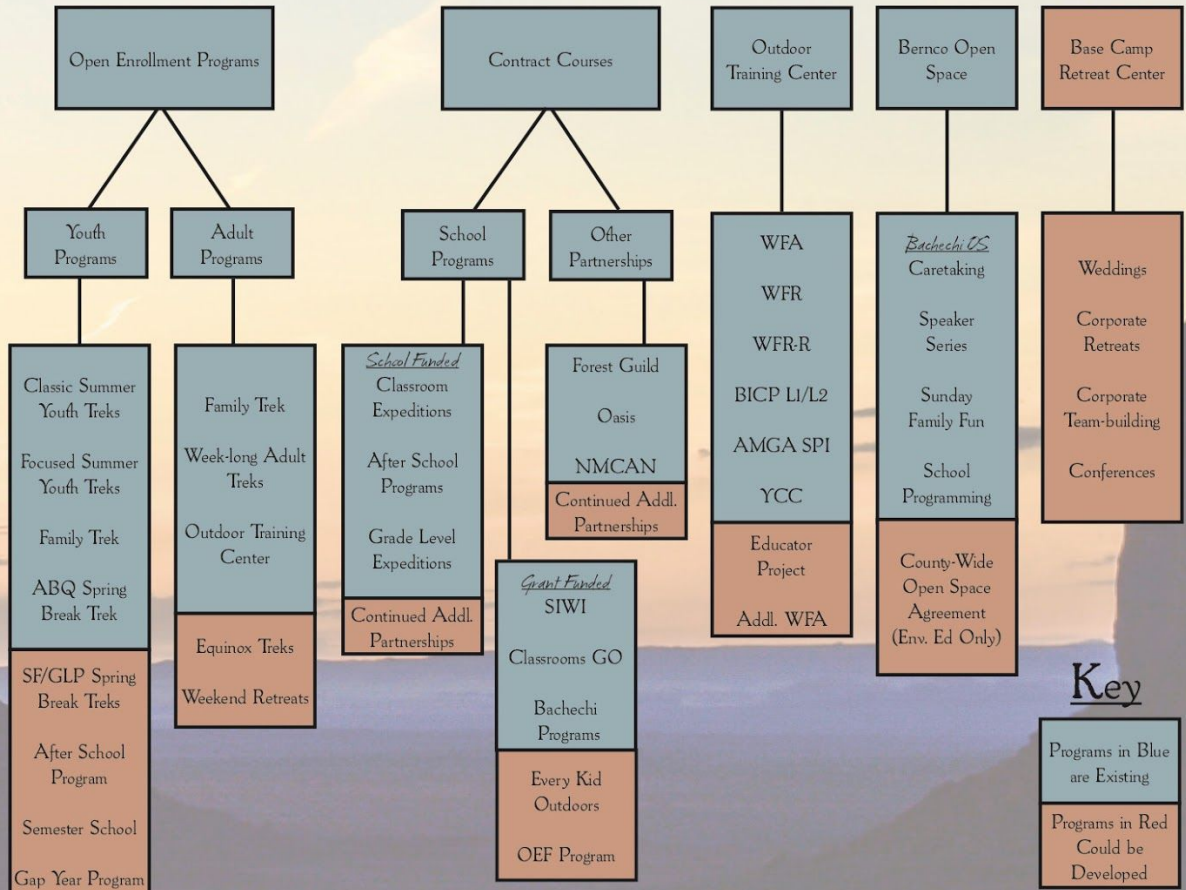
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# Cottonwood Gulch Expeditions Programs Overview



## Organization Overview and Highlights 2019

### Programs

As an organization, we facilitated experiences for 3,500 participants totaling 10,000 user days. We had strong summer enrollment with 157 trekkers and hope to continue that trend for the coming summer. Our summer programs are still the backbone of the organization and continuing full enrollment of these programs is a priority; these programs offer a unique opportunity for trekkers from across the world to experience the nature, culture, history, and science of the American Southwest. This year 31 schools were retained and began partnerships with 17 new schools. We modified our agreement with the Forest Service to continue our Youth Conservation Corps for next summer. Additionally, we've secured the funding from The Wilderness Society for next year's Students in Wilderness Initiative Program. Our Every Kid Outdoors program will unfortunately not be continuing in 2019 due to administrative challenges within the USFS. We hope to rebuild this program in the future.

### Staffing

Our summer staff team had a 25% return rate with 22% of staff being alumni. We've added a number of "Coordinator" positions and are in the process of hiring. These positions will spend approximately 60% of their time in the field and the rest of their work time supporting the administrative needs of the organization. Additionally, our field educator team will grow to include about 20 staff during the spring and fall seasons, and about 50 during our summer season.

### Financial Information

Our FY total revenue is \$1.27m of which \$1.1m was in annual operating revenue. We had \$120k in donations, \$64k in grants, and \$44k in government agreements. Our first ever capital campaign was completed with donations totalling \$1.9m. We purchased \$54k in capital expenditures including a new commissary vehicle and updated kitchen equipment. Our largest expense was personnel at \$653k. We gave \$65k in summer scholarships this year allowing 32 trekkers to come on trek with partial scholarships and \$25k in Classrooms GO funding supporting over 350 students getting outdoors for approximately 1000 user days. Continuing to diversify our income streams and develop additional annual giving is a focus in the coming year.

### Organizational Accomplishments

The US House of Representatives Subcommittee on Public Lands invited Cottonwood Gulch to provide testimony at a legislative hearing on the Recreation Not Red Tape Act and the Simplifying Outdoor Access for Recreation Act. It was an honor for one of our program directors to participate in the legislative process. A bit closer to New Mexico, the Mess Hall expansion project at Basecamp is days away from completion and we were able to use the recently completed Turquoise Trail Cabin Loop for trekkers this summer and fall seasons. Our solar installation project is underway as well, and should be fully operational before year's end.

## Organizational Achievements, Challenges and Needs

### Staffing

#### Achieved

- Retention of three Associate Director level staff
- Posting and beginning interviews for Coordinator level positions
- Retention of one Coordinator level staff person
- Promotion of one Associate Director
- Implementation of wage transparency table to assist with upcoming hiring season
- Creation of two new Program Director positions
- Hiring of Interim Executive Director to assist with permanent Executive Director hire

#### Challenges

- Recruiting a higher volume of staff than ever before

#### Needs

- Larger staff team
- More highly trained staff team
- Lower staff turnover
- Staff from NM Communities, particularly Latinx and Indigenous
- Photographer and/or videographer

### Programs

#### Achieved

- Funding for Students in Wilderness Initiative and Zuni Mountain YCC in 2020
- Strong summer enrollment
- High retention of contract courses
- High quality summer programs and school courses

#### Challenges

- Delays with Every Kid Outdoors funding from Forest Service
- Health forms and other paperwork needed earlier from schools and parents
- Low visibility in New Mexico community

#### Needs

- More user days on public lands
- Increased support of program areas
- Additional administrative time to address enrollment, cancellations, and forms
- Increased support of programmatic areas including sciences, arts, etc.

### Vehicles

#### Achieved

- New Commissary Truck
- Continued annual maintenance on our fleet

#### Challenges

- Increase in gas use to get to/from meetings and classrooms, esp. for SIWI
- Schools requesting busses, not vans

#### Needs

- One new commissary truck in 2020
- One new 15-pass vehicle (Mini bus)
- One hybrid sedan for meetings/office work

### Gear

#### Achieved

- Fleet of gear for SIWI and Classrooms GO students
- Summer gear fleet adequate
- Additional DeLorme GPS Device added to fleet
- Funding from Barker Foundation invested in new programming resources for various areas
- Additional safety gear purchased for trailwork, YCC crews, etc.
- New first aid kits built for 2019-2020

#### Challenges

- Tracking gear needs and repairs without a dedicated person
- As gear fleet grows and ages, need for replacements

#### Needs

- Warmer more durable layers for students in early Spring and Fall programming
- Gear Coordinator for 2020
- 10-20 additional tents for 2020
- New repair kits for 2020

### Facilities

#### Achieved

- Completed construction of two sheds in Albuquerque for gear and food storage
- Completed construction of TT cabin loop and four vault toilets at Basecamp
- Near completion of Mess Hall expansion project
- Progress on solar installation at Basecamp
- Completion of .75 miles of mountain bike trail at Basecamp
- New roof for Albuquerque office building
- Upgrade of electrical panel at Caretakers house
- Replacement of benches in Cottonwoods Circle and Campfire Circle at Basecamp

#### Challenges

- Parking at North Valley Office
- Piles of dirt and rock left over from Basecamp construction
- Aging farm infrastructure (chicken coops, composting system, hoop houses)
- Area for deconning of gear at North Valley Office

#### Needs

- Additional washing machine for North Valley Office to be able to clean/care for gear
- Washing machines at Basecamp in new building
- Basecamp office needs updating (not enough outlets, not enough work stations)

- Toilet for TT cabin loop
- Additional parking space near North Valley Office
- Covered “outdoor kitchen” structure at North Valley Office
- Covered “outdoor kitchen” at Outfit cabin loop
- Completion of new building, including buildout of spaces and furnishing
- Mattresses for TT cabin loop
- Stone work on Cha’Oh columns and on new building
- Long-term additional staff housing at Basecamp and North Valley Office
- Wood stoves for TT loop

## Marketing and Recruiting

### Achieved

- Consistent blog posting
- Multiple events both locally and nationally
- Early registration has been successful again in 2019 (20+ trekkers registered for 2020)
- Local tabling events seem to be creating brand familiarity locally
- 72% conversion rate from trekker inquiry to enrolled trekker

### Challenges

- Google Ads - effective, but expensive
- Identifying best places to spend marketing budget
- Maximizing word of mouth marketing

### Needs

- Updated marketing video
- More visibility in New Mexico community
- Continued lack of adequate marketing photos
- Need high quality cameras for staff to take out on treks
- Additional staff time to work Social Media presence and lead generation

## Technology

### Achieved

- Four Chromebook laptops purchased for light office tasks
- Verizon booster device at Basecamp allows Verizon phones service at the office
- Increased office internet speed at Basecamp

### Challenges

- Only one phone line at Basecamp
- Limited internet bandwidth available at Basecamp
- Can’t remotely access the server (must be in the North Valley Office)
- Campminder software still unable to support adult/family programs and school programs

### Needs

- New based server (Mac based preferred)
- Multi-function printer (Color duplex printer/scanner)
- DSLR camera to take high-quality marketing photos
- CRM Software to cultivate donor base and create stronger email update



## Open Enrollment Programs and Recruiting Report

Open enrollment programs for youth and families continue to be a large part of what we do. Overall, we had fairly strong enrollment. Some treks were small and others had low enrollment, we decided to cancel and offer those families a space in another trek of their choosing, a deferral of funds to the following year, or a refund. Additionally, staffing shortages contributed to a challenging summer overall, however, we received great reviews from our summer trekkers. We anticipate a low return rate for Mountain Desert Trek participants as many of them stated they felt as if they completed their Gulch experience. They also expressed an interest in returning as staff one day, as early as summer 2020. Bringing in new leads continues to be a challenge for our open enrollment programs.

- Strong summer enrollment
- Several trekkers cancelled last minute
- Paleo Trek had a wait list

### Trekker Geographic Distribution

Region	States	Percent of Trekkers
Northeast	CT, MA, VT, NH	7%
Southeast	FL, LA, NC, TN, SC, GA	7%
Mid-Atlantic	PA, MD, NY, NJ, VA	18%
Southwest	AZ, CO, NM, UT, TX	48%
Midwest	IL, IN, MI, MO, OH, WI, MN	8%
West Coast	CA, WA, OR	5%
Abroad	France, Israel, Hong Kong, Canada, Russia, Montenegro	7%

- Southwest continues to be our strongest region
- More representation from other regions than last year
- Continuing to recruit from other regions and internationally

### Scholarships and Discounts:

This year we awarded approximately \$65,000 of scholarships that went to 32 different trekkers. The scholarship recipients represent 23% of trekkers enrolled in 2019 summer programs. Additionally, we ran a promotion to encourage early enrollment that resulted in discounts for about 25 trekkers.

- One student came to us via YES Prep in Houston thanks to Scott Pierce's generosity.
- The Ross Fund supported one Outfit trekker.
- The Fortune Fund made it possible for two trekkers to have a Gulch summer.
- The French-Williams Fund was divided between two trekkers.
- The Koral Fund funded one trekker.
- The Cohen Scholarship Fund supported five trekkers.
- The Barker Foundation made it possible for eight trekkers to join the Gulch in 2019.
- The Howie Scholarship Fund was divided between eight trekkers.
- Individual contributions also supported a number of trekkers.

## Contract Courses 2018-2019: Overview

Cottonwood Gulch has provided schools and other entities custom programs for 20 years. What started as a relationship with one school program has grown to provide environmental education programs to thousands of youth each year and allows us to partner with various other organizations we support. While we are continuing to grow our contract courses, our current growth focus is in some of our grant-funded schools programs as part of Classrooms Get Outdoors and our Students in Wilderness Initiative.



Our contract course program has been strong in the 2018-2019 year. We had a total of 73 different expeditions, ranging from single day programs in Albuquerque to 14 day expeditions through Utah and Arizona with schools, partner nonprofits, and other organizations. We continue to have strong programs with a number of Albuquerque and Santa Fe schools that we've worked with for over 5 years; these represent programmatic relationships that have spanned several teachers, Gulch staff, etc. These types of programs ultimately make the "backbone" of our school programs. Our contract course program grossed approximately \$275k and awarded approximately \$100k in scholarships. We added a few new schools to our contract courses this year, including programs local to Gallup, Santa Fe, and Albuquerque, as well as a few from further afield. Our Classrooms GO program, Every Kid Outdoors program, and SIWI program have provided great doorways to working with schools; on several occasions, we have seen these initial grant-funded programs be expanded to additional grade levels beyond the initial grant funding we supported the programs we facilitate.

One of our greatest highlights of the year is not the addition of new schools, but the deepening of relationships with existing contract courses and the retention of contract courses from last year to this year. Our relationship with a number of local nonprofits, including The Forest Guild, NMCAN, OASIS, RiverSource, and RMYC in either providing services (cooking, facilities, programming, etc) or in collaborating on programs (science, conservation work). In terms of retaining schools, we anticipate a retention rate of 80-90% from 2019-2020 with our school programs. This is significantly higher than in previous years, and we will continue working to retain schools as much as bring new schools in.



Part of our effort to retain contract courses is having more highly trained field staff who can lead these programs without our full time team being in the field. We are achieving this through several methods, hiring additional “field educator/coordinator” positions, who serve as lead staff, increased training time for Spring/Fall staff, and by hiring more experienced staff in the Spring and Fall than we have in previous years. Part of this effort has spurred greater advertisement of field educator positions and more active staff recruitment for positions at all levels in the organization. We are working towards creating a staff handbook that is more accessible for field staff who work Spring/Fall school programs.

In the 2019-2020 season, we anticipate a similar season length (slightly longer) than this past year, additional staff compared to last year (in part to accommodate SIWI programs), and increased coordinator work for field/admin staff. Our gear fleet is prepared to absorb this growth, and with anticipated vehicle purchases our vehicle fleet will be ready. We anticipate the additional programs we are running to bring in some greater income for 2020, but are still in the process of contracting and developing these programs.

### School Programs List

<b>Type of Program</b>	<b>State of School</b>	<b>Name of Program</b>	<b># of Participants</b>	<b># of Days</b>
TP	NM	Bernalillo HS	11	1
CP	NM	Mandela Int'l 9th	34	1
CP	NM	Mandela Int'l 11th	22	1
CP	NM	Monte del Sol Charter	37	3
CP	NM	Montessori of the Rio Grande (1 Day)	55	1
CP	NM	South Valley Prep 7th	47	1
TP	NM	Van Buren SIWI Nov 2018 Overnight	10	2
TP	NM	Van Buren SIWI Dec 2018 1 day	20	1
NP	Various	Global 1-1	7	1
CP	NM	eCademy--Bachechi	18	1
CP	NM	eCademy--Tent Rocks	13	1
CP	NM	Six Directions Indigenous School--EKIP	49	2
TP	NM	El Camino Real-Diablo Canyon	90	1
CP	NM	Hozho Academy-3rd--EKIP	20	2
CP	NM	Hozho Academy-4th/5th--EKIP	45	2
TP	NM	Chee Dodge Elementary--EKIP	45	2
TP	NM	Los Alamos	30	1
TP	NM	Los Alamos	30	1
TP	NM	Crownpoint High School--EKIP	65	2
NP	NM	NMCAN (Spring)	10	3
TP	NM	El Camino Real (1 Day)	90	1
TP	NM	El Camino Real (3 Day)	19	3
PR	NM	Escuela Juniors (3 day)	39	3
PR	NM	Escuela Seniors (4 day)	25	
PR	NM	Escuela Jr High (5 day)	8	5
CP	NM	Mandela 8th grade	17	3
CP	NM	Mandela Art (9th-10th)	17	2
CP	TX	Magellan School	20	5
PR	NJ	Montclair School (Apr 29-May 10)	14	12
CP	NM	Montessori of the Rio Grande Overnight	66	2
CP	NM	Mountain Mahogany	10	3
TP	NM	Navajo Elem	50	1
PR	NM	Rio Grande School	16	4
PR	PA	Springside Chestnut Hill	19	8

Type of Program	State of School	Name of Program	# of Participants	# of Days
CP	NM	South Valley Prep 7th	20	2
PR	NM	Journey Montessori	8	5
CP	NM	Six Directions -- 6/7th	19	2
CP	NM	Six Directions -- 8/9th	17	2
CP	AZ	Augustus Shaw Montessori--MS	17	4
CP	NM	Technology Leadership High School 11/12	19	3
CP	NM	Hozho Academy 4th/5th	40	2
CP	NM	eCademy-Teambuilding	80	1
CP	NM	eCademy- -Bandalier	40	1
CP	NM	eCademy-- trip to Jemez	20	1
TP	NM	Van Buren SIWI Apr 2019 Overnight	20	5
TP	NM	Van Buren SIWI Mar 2019 1 day	20	1
TP	NM	El Dorado MS 8th	60	1
CP	NM	MDS 7th Grade	51	1
TP	NM	Taylor MS 8th	110	1
PR	NM	Chinook Spirit Academy	12	1
NP	TX	Discover U MS	14	8
NP	NM	Dlooyazhi Camp	14	1
NP	NM	ZYEP	24	4
NP	Various	Global 1-1 (Students from Mexico)	14	5
CP	NM	ABHS Freshman	84	1
NP	NM	NMCAN (Fall)	10	3
PR	NM	Escuela Juniors (1 day)	32	1
PR	NM	Escuela Juniors (Overnight)	12	2
PR	NM	Escuela Seniors	27	3
PR	NM	Escuela Jr. High	10	10
NP	NM	Forest Guild User Group	20	5
CP	NM	Mandela Int'l 12th DP	33	2
CP	NM	Mandela Int'l 7th	54	3
CP	NM	Mandela Int'l 9th	30	1
CP	NM	Montessori of the Rio Grande	65	1
PR	NM	Sandia Prep	75	2
CP	NM	South Valley Prep 6th	53	1
CP	NM	SDIS Teambuilding	1	2
CP	NM	SDIS Teambuilding	60	1
CP	NM	SDIS Whole School Camp	60	2
CP	NM	eCademy	14	1
CP	NM	Monte del Sol Charter 11th	32	4

Type of Program Key

CP-Charter, Public

PR-Private

NP-Nonprofit

TP-Traditional, Public

## Get Outdoors (GO) and Every Kid Outdoors (EKO)

Our Classrooms GO and EKO programs were both strong in 2019. Classrooms GO provided close to \$25k in scholarships for Title 1 students in New Mexico, and EKO provided \$28k in scholarships for students in McKinley and Cibola Counties through an agreement with the USFS. We anticipate Classrooms GO provides between \$25-30k in 2020, through continued donor support as well as several grants we have written. Unfortunately, though we were promised funding for our EKO program, administrative federal hurdles prevented a 2020 program. We are hopeful that we can find another funding stream in future years for this program.

### Classrooms GO

- Our Classrooms Get Outdoors program is a “step-down” funding model that starts with schools receiving 75% scholarship, and over a 4 year period steps down to 10-20% ongoing scholarship
- This program is funded via alumni donations, grant writing, and generous family foundations
- All participating schools must be Title 1 schools from New Mexico

### EKO

- Our EKO program in fall of 2018 was very successful and enrolled 300 youth outdoors through a partnership with the USFS; It is part of our “Classrooms Get Outdoors” program
- This is part of a national, federal program that was congressionally delegated/funded
- Schools in this program must be Title 1 schools in McKinley, Sandoval, or Cibola Counties
- Our 2019 program, while approved and successfully awarded, was not funded due to last-minute administrative hurdles within the USFS; We are working to see if these hurdles can be worked out for 2020. At a local level, the Forest Service is excited about this program.

## Students in Wilderness Initiative (SIWI)

The second year of the Students in Wilderness Initiative has been off to a wild start! We are working with five schools from Santa Fe and Albuquerque, we have spent two days learning in the classroom and four days in the field. To sequence our expeditions to build student interest and relationship with the Gulch, schools went on single-day expeditions to the Pecos, Sandias, and Bosque del Apache. Afterwards, many students braved their first ever camping trips, enjoying Ah-Shi-Sle-Pah, San Pedro Parks, El Malpais, Mt. Taylor, and the canyon country near Bosquecito.

We are noticing that our 8th graders have limited attention spans, consequently talking while others are talking, especially on our expeditions. This has been challenging for our staff because within the first 24 hours of trek, we tend to inundate students with integral information for their safety and well-being. By spending a year with these students, we hope to build positive habit patterns of respect and an understanding of the Gulch way.

Our seasonal staff team has brought some excellent programming that have enriched our expeditions, including geology talks, creative writing exercises, and games that engage the wild energy of students in positive ways. We are also celebrating that this year’s students are showing greater trust in the Gulch, particularly around trekking

without their cell phones, our management of their safety in the backcountry and communication with the schools, which were reasons why many families were hesitant to send their students on expeditions last year. Students are also reporting having extremely positive experiences despite some nervousness before the trips, including one student who said to another, “Dude, I thought this trip was going to suck, but it was lowkey lit.”



School	Location	Students Served in Classroom	Students on 3-Day
Monte del Sol Charter School	Santa Fe	80	54
Mountain Mahogany Community School	Albuquerque	25	18
South Valley Academy	Albuquerque	92	32
South Valley Preparatory School	Albuquerque	48	32
Van Buren Middle School	Albuquerque	25	24
<b>Total</b>		<b>270</b>	<b>160</b>

### Youth Conservation Corps (YCC)

The YCC’s mission is to better the land through community, leadership, conservation and practicing hard work. This year our YCC crew of nine members and two staff worked for seven weeks on trails in the Cibola and Lincoln National Forest, as well as designing new structures at Cottonwood Gulch’s basecamp near Gallup. After a staff training, which included proper tool use, safe working habits, and teamwork, the YCC spent six weeks honing these qualities through their work load and walked away from the summer with skills and friendships that they’ll carry the rest of their lives.

To the joy of many at Basecamp, the crew began their work by designing and building four much-needed pit toilets that matched the rest of the style of our new Basecamp buildings (including six new cabins and an extension of our mess hall). On the road, the crew established a routine in the field that set them up for successful days on the trail early on: wake up early, scarf down breakfast, pack a lunch, grab the tools and march to the worksite. Some days, depending on yesterday’s work effort, the crew would hike two to three miles to start where they left off and kept pushing forward until it was time to walk back to camp and start cooking dinner. Through the YCC work in the Lincoln and Manzanos, the crew learned valuable lessons about working in alpine environments under a southwest sun, applying the correct space between each other working with trail tools, navigating terrain off trail to access viewpoints for planning, and how to manage their own resources throughout a day in the mountains, making sure hydration and nutrition was the highest priority.





“Spending this summer on YCC was the most amazing summer of my life. This was my fourth and final year at Cottonwood Gulch, and I could not have asked for a more incredible experience. Within the first few days, it was clear that our crew was a special one. Even as our numbers changed our group got along so well. We did two kinds of work throughout the summer, building latrines at base camp, and trail maintenance in the Lincoln and Cibola National Forest. Though the work was very rewarding, and the views we had doing trail maintenance were spectacular, our jobs were sometimes very hard and stressful. Having such an amazing crew lead by such wonderful leaders made everything worth it. I am so proud of everything we accomplished this summer, from building tongue and groove walls, to sawing almost 300 downed trees, to waking up at 5 every morning to make breakfast, to learning what to do in case of a medical emergency in the wilderness. This crew was the most hard working, dedicated, kind, and hilarious, and *hard working* crew I have ever met, and I am so glad to have had the opportunity to work with the Y.C.C.” -Leah G. (YCC crew member)

## Bachechi Open Space Update

### Speaker Series

Our Speaker Series events at Bachechi Open Space, have had some highly popular attendance rates with upwards of 30-40 people attending some events. We were able to secure presenters who partnered with us in the spirit of community engagement and collaboration. Some of the presenting organizations are also partners with the Gulch for School Programs and Hawks Aloft. Local TV stations and newspapers showed interest by featuring a few events of their own accord: The Poetry Through The Seasons series, The Sunset Meditations in Nature series which were both part of our Sense of Time and Place Programs, and the Maxwell Museum Trunk series that made up the Land/People/Culture Program. We still have four events to end 2019 and attendance so far is almost at 300 participants. Looking towards 2020, we aim to design a program series which increases awareness of Gulch Adult Treks and Family Treks, and having the Gulch Friends who help facilitate these treks become Speaker Series presenters. For more information on the events offered as part of the Speaker Series, visit our website (<https://www.cottonwoodgulch.org/treks/bachechi-speaker-series/>).

### Sunday Family Fun Day

Our Sunday Family Fun Day events are still going strong. Families express appreciation each week of having free interactive educational opportunities in the city that allow them to safely engage with their children in learning about the local flora/fauna and ecology. Attendance at these events was difficult to track this year (from Feb-June) with staff changeovers at both the Gulch and the County and it being the end/start of our contract

cycle. At this point in the calendar year, we have served roughly 200 participants starting in July. We are building better tracking methods so we can have an accurate sense of impact in the community going forward.

### School Programs

As part of our contract course programs with schools as well as our Classrooms Get Outdoors programs, we offer environmental education focused programs at the Bachechi Open Space. In 2019, we got roughly 350 students out to the open space through our relationship with Bernalillo County!



### Marketing Strategies

Our 2019-2020 marketing initiatives are rooted in the web-based advertising that were successful as well as some newer strategies to engage our local community to a greater degree. A combination of Gulch media streams, a new blog, and paid advertisements target the existing Gulch communities as well as bring in new interest. Our priority remains our summer Treks and significant effort and resources will be spent to meet target enrollment. At the same time, a more holistic approach to our marketing will generate awareness and interest in all aspects of Cottonwood Gulch programming. Using the following model, we hope to hone our marketing seasonally depending what area of programming we want to advertise. Word of mouth marketing has historically and continues to be our largest draw to bring kids into the Gulch's programs. We are continuing to explore ways that we can leverage this strong point in our marketing to enroll more trekkers.

In addition to the methods we have used in the past, we are continuing to work with a number of local outdoor/adventure organizations to try and reach out to our local communities in person. We have been able to trade staff volunteer time and raffle prizes to become a sponsor of a local event and to have a booth set up to talk about the Gulch. We have continued partnerships with Zia Rides

(mountain bike race series in the Southwest), with Stone Age Climbing Gym (Albuquerque climbing hub), and with Bernalillo County Open Spaces in this capacity. We also had a table at an Educator's Open House hosted by the City of Albuquerque. The goal of being at these events is to increase our name recognition in the local community, to support local organizations and events that align with our mission, and to find new specific leads for our programs.

Over the past five years, we have seen our parent base shift to be mostly GenX parents; currently, our "target market" of parents is almost entirely in that generation. We have researched and integrated techniques that fit this generation of adults into our marketing strategy more explicitly in order to try and find our niche in this market. Some strategies that have worked well so far have been early registration at last year's prices. This method has had stunning results last year and has continued to work well this year. We noticed more inviting and less directive marketing in our ads have been successful, for example, "Visit our website if you'd like to learn more!" Vs. "Click Here!".

Additionally, we have completely redesigned our single-page print material that highlights each trek. Trekkers (and families) can see that even though Prairie Trek is still Prairie Trek, it will be going to different places next year. This creates a sense of difference in our extended programs from year to year. We will continue to analyze and assess our marketing materials and strategies to speak to the generations of parents that are relevant to our core programs. Looking forward, we are approaching a redesign of our evergreen brochure and will be looking at ways to maximize its efficacy.

**Prairie Trek 2019**  
 36-days exploring the Southwest's most rugged, wild, and fascinating places  
 Days: 4-15 years old  
 June 26 - July 28  
 tuition: \$9750

**Five Weeks Exploring the Southwest**  
 We believe that no experience can match that of discovering wild places with friends. This five week, all state trek will explore and celebrate our region through wilderness backpacking, local service projects, rock climbing, canoeing/rafting, and exploration of cultural and scientific sites around the Four Corners. In addition to time spent "on the road," PT will spend about a week at our base camp in Thoreau, NM with the opportunity to dive deep into a project and explore new areas of interest.

**This Year's Highlights Include:**

- Backpacking Mount Tubaicievitz in Utah and the Blue Range of Arizona
- Hike to Keet Seel, a 12 mile day hike to the best preserved ancestral Puebloan site in the Southwest
- Mountain bikes in the Zuni Mountains
- Service projects to conserve wildlife and public lands

**A Packed Itinerary: Two Backpacking Expeditions, Artist Visits, and Adventure Await!**  
 The 2019 Prairie Trek itinerary packs in two multi-day backpacking expeditions in the wilderness of Arizona and Utah, visits with several Native American artists and friends, and opportunities to rock climb, mountain bike, farm, build, and create art with our specialists. Trekkers on PT return home with a newfound curiosity about the natural world and a newfound confidence in themselves.

## Notes from Field Operations

It has been an exciting year for permits at the Gulch. To start, on September 19th, Matt testified in front of the US Congress on behalf of the Simplifying Outdoor Access for Recreation Act, and the Recreation Not Red Tape Act. Both of these proposed acts would greatly simplify the permitting process for the Gulch, and help us maintain and amend our current permits. Specifically, Matt addressed the struggles the Gulch and other recreation organizations are challenged by in our current system. Among other elements, he advocated for a more streamlined fee structure, guaranteed extension for permits if compliance is maintained, and to homogenize the application process, where currently each office has their own specific process and paperwork. On our side of things, we have been trying to go through the same process, simplifying, streamlining, and increasing information access for other staff. As the Gulch has moved from an analog workspace into a more digital workspace, our permitting paperwork and process has shifted as well. Through different people in the field operations position, and a few different organization systems, historical knowledge and tracking permit usage has been inconsistent. Because of this, a big picture of where we are accumulating our user days throughout the year, and adequately adjusting has not been done. Moving forward, we have a better system of tracking our usage, and making sure we stay within our agreement limits. In summary, we are no longer in the era of galavanting through the southwest camping on whatever public land can be found, but we are ever pushing to expand the diversity of lands we can visit, and increase the number of user days in our most accessed public land designations.



## Outdoor Training Center

For several years, we have been hosting wilderness medicine classes through NOLS Wilderness Medicine. We are one of the only hosts in New Mexico for some of these courses and are expanding our offerings to include hosting other professional development trainings in the outdoor industry. Our planned offerings in 2020 include:

- Wilderness First Aid
- Wilderness First Responder
- Wilderness First Responder Recertification
- Bike Instructor Certification Program Level 1 and Level 2
- American Mountain Guide Association Single Pitch Instructor
- Leave No Trace Master Educator

One of the challenges we've continued to face is our ability to hire staff who are demographically representative of many of the students we work with. Therefore, we've begun seeking funding in order to offer a three to four outdoor professional training project that would focus on skills needed for work in the outdoor industry. The pilot project, if funded, would have spaces for 13 students with 8-10 of those spaces being eligible for full scholarships.

## New Building Updates

This year was an exciting year for construction at the Gulch. We completed the addition of six new cabins and an outdoor kitchen in honor of the Turquoise Trail Expedition. During the spring and summer, completed the installation of four new vault toilets, similar to ones found in our National Parks. Continuing from the Fall of 2018, we have been nearing completion of our Mess Hall/QuarterMaster (QM) expansion project and are hopeful that by our annual meeting, the project is at least 95-100% complete!

### Turquoise Trail Cabin Loop:

This might have been the most simple construction project this year. We had 37 students, their leaders and coordination own the project. Much of the leg work was taken care of and we eagerly kept the crew fed and happy. In March, the students moved over 57,000 tons of concrete in wheelbarrows from a Ready-Mix truck parked on the Forest Service road through the woods to the site for each cabin to set the footings. They returned in May to complete the final build-out and battled weather, fatigue, and the impacts of New Mexico elements on their supplies to deliver a stunning product!





#### Vault Latrines:

Insight Construction sunk the vaults and poured the foundation that allowed for us to accept volunteer work from Richard Schultz to construct the buildings. Richard was an amazing presence to have a base camp this summer! He handled the building project from start to finish using leftover lumber from the TT Cabin Loop and help from several trekkers and staff. So many of the kids said learning to work with tools and helping to build something with their hands was their favorite part of the summer!

#### Mess Hall / QM Expansion:

This project has been a labor of love and it has also been the source of a few extra grey hairs and wrinkles! Now it's wrapping up and coming to an end, there have been a few delays and unforeseen issues really put a strain on our summer programming. Delightfully, the Gulch community really embraced the difficulty and navigated the rest of the summer without issue. As a result, the project moved onward and we saw things evolve in real-time. We're excited to see the site be fully utilized next Spring, Summer and Fall!



## Campaign and Giving Report

<b>FY 2018-19 total campaign donations</b>			
(campaign closed as of Jan 2019)			
	campaign unrestricted	\$338,730	
	campaign restricted	\$65,333	
Total Dedicated Campaign donations for 2018-19		<b>\$404,063</b>	this FY
Endowed Named Funds Scholarship Donations:			
<b>11/7/14 - 9/30/19</b>	Billings	\$20,150	
	Van Sickle	\$21,700	
	Chet	\$68,750	
	Olmstead	\$1,010	
	Lorenz	\$11,276	
	Rakoff	\$25,000	(newly endowed scholarship fund)
		<b>\$147,886</b>	
Campaign expenditures:			
Campaign total:		<b>\$1,904,704</b>	
ABQ office building		-\$321,928	
Cha 'Oh pavilion		-\$246,536	
Construction in progress (2019 FY)		-\$876,441	
Equipment		-\$29,516	
Buildings - other		-\$10,055	
Other campaign expenditures (salaries and indirect costs)*		-\$138,164	
2020 FY Expenses paid to Insight Construction		-\$171,391	(paid to Insight Construction)
Named endowed scholarship donations - funds allocated but yet not moved to endowment		-\$147,886	
		-230,000	
Upcoming construction costs TBD (appx. Insight and AFP)			
Currently in Vanguard building fund account		<b>\$311,354</b>	
Outstanding pledges:		\$43,679	Hooper
		\$10,000	Klaff
		\$1000	Udall
		\$200	Goodkind
		<b>\$54,879.35</b>	

- These costs include a new van, and indirect costs moved from campaign funds back to the annual operating account to cover 25% of Executive Director and Office Manager salary, 75 - 100% of Development Associate Director's salary, 25% of office rent and phone, fuel for trips to base camp, and printing, postage, development campaign costs.

## Board of Directors Update

The Board elected two new members who will join starting in October: Alice Kodama of California, a former staff from 2012 and trekker from the 2000s, and Stephen Sedam of Ohio, a trekker from the 1960s. The board terms of Scott Pierce and Tom Hyde are both up for renewal. Scott Pierce has been nominated to replace Richard as Vice-Chair.

The Board thanks our departing Directors for their service: Thierry Wilbrandt, Richard McGinnis, and Friedje vanGils. Your contributions and wisdom over the years have been invaluable!

The Board has initiated the search for the next Executive Director. For more information or to view the job posting visit our website at [www.CottonwoodGulch.org](http://www.CottonwoodGulch.org).

The Board is looking for new members, with an emphasis on those with K-12 school experience and from the Albuquerque area, in addition to other perspectives not represented on our Board. Email Greg at [gregdbarker@hotmail.com](mailto:gregdbarker@hotmail.com) with nominations or to express interest.

## Support Us!

There are many ways to support Cottonwood Gulch Expeditions and our trekkers! We could use your time, talents, financial support and other types of in-kind donations. For a specific list and ways you can contribute, please visit our website:

<https://www.cottonwoodgulch.org/supportus/>

Thank you for learning more about Cottonwood Gulch Expeditions, the trekkers, staff and programs.