

Follow the Royal Road

Friends of El Camino Real Historic Trail Site

Volume 1, No. 2

Newsletter Published Quarterly

April 2016

Plan A Springtime Trip Before Summer Heat Arrives



Yes, we know that New Mexico is not noted for its lovely spring weather, but just because it's windy is no reason to stay at home feeling grumpy. Now is the time to visit El Camino Real Historic Trail Site. In fact, pack a picnic lunch and plenty of water and make it a day trip. Directions for getting to the Site are found on page 6.

We have a wonderful facility where you can enjoy (out of the wind!) an introductory film about the history and pre-history of the area, and then tour the excellent museum. After that, stop in at the newly remodeled Museum Gift and Book Shop, which is full of books about the trail, the geology and history of New Mexico, with an excellent selection of children's books and learning materials. There are also gifts and beautiful jewelry made by local artisans.

When it's time to leave, if you are heading north toward Albuquerque try taking the slow road, which was U.S. Highway 85 before I-25 was built, and is now State Road 1. Turn right when you get back to the intersection behind the Rest Stop and stay on the frontage road. The two-lane road is fully paved, and now serves as a well maintained scenic route with very little traffic. Ye Olde Editor of this Newsletter well remembers rumbling along Highway 85 many times in the days of her youth, usually in the back seat of a Buick station wagon.

If time allows, you can take the marked side road to visit the ruins of Ft. Craig, an important Civil War era fort. Here you also get a panoramic view of the wide Rio Grande Valley and *Mesa de Contadero* (the counting place), now called Black Mesa – for obvious reasons! This landmark was an important point along El Camino Real, where the trail was narrowed and confined by lava flows, allowing Spanish travelers the opportunity to organize and count the straggling herds of animals that were a vital part of any large caravan moving slowly northward toward Santa Fe.

Now, back to Highway 1 – next stop is the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge. This is a wonderful refuge for both humans and wildlife, peaceful and lovely at any season. Be sure to stop at the visitor's center and then take the loop road through the wetlands. The sandhill cranes and snow geese have flown north for the summer, but lots of ducks and numerous other birds and animals make the Bosque their year around home. By now it's probably fairly late in the day, so as you drive along the quiet road, watch for hawks, deer, coyotes, perhaps a covey of quail with tiny babies hurrying along behind their mama.

Back again on Highway 1, you are closely following the original Camino Real, a pathway used for centuries by native people, Spanish settlers, pioneers, and now you. When you reach Highway 380 in San Antonio you can hop back on I-25 to finish your journey. Navigating the local farm roads beyond can be tricky.

Camino de Sueños (The Road of Dreams)



Many visitors to the Trail Site ask us about “that big thing out near the highway.” As the sign at the small parking area near it tells us, this monumental sculpture is one of the Cultural Corridors public art projects along El Camino Real Scenic Byway. It was created by Greg E. Reiche in 2005, and it is really the only thing directly relating to El Camino Real Historic Trail Site that can be seen from I-25. The sculpture serves as something of a gateway and focal point for the museum, which is only three miles farther down the side road. The design represents the mountains on either edge of the Rio Grande Valley, with the blue river flowing between them. The Road of Dreams is, of course, El Camino Real, where so many braved the rough and dangerous miles in search of their own dreams.

Coming Soon – The Fiber Fair!!
Saturday May 21 10am-5pm
Free Admission For All

This event celebrates New Mexico’s rich, storied, and multi-cultural fiber arts tradition. Make your plans to come and spend the day at the Trail Site. There will be demonstrations of traditional and modern weaving and decorative techniques: basketry, colcha embroidery,

textiles, rug weaving, and more. You can watch and speak to talented artisans as they work, and some will have their crafts available for sale. The Museum and the Gift Shop will be open, of course, and local food vendors will be cooking their specialties for purchase. Our popular *horno* (outdoor oven) will be fired up for demonstrations as well. Watch for a special notice giving more details as the date for the Fair draws closer.

Pictures from the 2015 Fiber Fair



Churro sheep, first brought to New Mexico by Spanish settlers traveling on El Camino Real



Weaving Demonstration – A skill that takes years of dedicated work to perfect



Friends' Website Under Construction

A group of Friends has been working to give our website an upgrade – a new look with more information about our programs and activities. Naturally, the project is taking longer than expected (doesn't everything?), but we have hopes that it will be ready for its debut in the near future. Not only will you be able to renew your membership and check the calendar to find out what is going on at the Trail Site, but you will also be able to learn about the history of El Camino Real, take a virtual tour of the museum, read back issues of the Newsletter, and enjoy wonderful pictures of the museum and the surrounding area. Watch for our Virtual Grand Opening, coming soon to your computer!



New Computer System In the Gift Shop

Another big project that the Friends tackled recently was an update of the computer inventory and sales system for the Gift Shop. The old system had been in place for ten years – ancient by computer standards! The biggest problem was the new-fangled chips that are now in all recently issued credit cards. They are intended to help reduce credit card fraud, but the result was that our antiquated system did not recognize them at all, and since nearly all purchases made in the Gift Shop are made with credit cards, the problem was getting more serious (and embarrassing!) every day.

Our intrepid Board Secretary, Liz Vallejos, researched both a computer upgrade and a new Point of Sale system. It keeps track of inventory, both incoming and outgoing, as

vendor orders come in and customers find lovely treasures to buy – now safely using their computer-chipped credit cards. The Friends were happy to provide funding for this new system, and as soon as all Gift Shop volunteers get used to it, things should run much more efficiently.

This is also the time to mention Sandy Qureshi, the Friends' "Buyer-In-Chief" who does the purchasing for the Shop. She keeps track of our stock and makes sure that new and interesting things are always coming in. Sandy is the one who deals with numerous vendors, and sees to it that orders for new items or old favorites are on our shelves when you come in to shop. We are especially proud of the large selection of bilingual children's books, as well as another large section of books specifically about *El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro* (The Royal Road to the Interior Lands).

Coming Events for 2016

Mark your calendars!

May 21 – El Camino Real Fiber Fair

Get the details for this event on page 2.

September 24 – Native New Mexico

Celebrate New Mexico's native peoples at a daylong festival of art, demonstrations, and music and dance performances – and food!

November 19 – Festival of the Trail

This all-day, family-friendly event features music, talks, demonstrations and crafts and food available for purchase.

Be A Friend!!

Don't miss out on Free Admission, five Visitor Passes for family or friends, 10% Gift Shop Discount, and The Newsletter! Fill in the form on page 6 and send it in TODAY. You'll be glad you did.

The January newsletter mentioned that we were hoping to have some repairs and remodeling done in the Museum Gift Shop. Well, it happened! A Friends crew arrived on a chilly winter morning, and in less than half a day we went from this:



to this:



Working like a bunch of demented beavers dismantling their own dam, our crew of four Friends, one captured husband, and two site rangers, packed up boxes and boxes of books, gifts, ornaments and jewelry, stashing them in a storage area.

All photos by Friends of El Camino

Then we wrestled with the Big Stuff – the show cases and bookshelves – moving them to the far end of the room to give as much space as possible for the repair crew.



Heave!



Ho!



Site Manager Chris Hanson checks out the water-damaged wall caused by a frozen pipe

As many of you know, the Trail Site is in a fairly remote location, far from even small towns, so it is difficult to arrange for contractors to come out to do any work there. But, Site Manager Chris Hanson managed to work a small miracle, and in a surprisingly short time, a few days only, we got the message that, guess what? OH! NO! IT'S TIME TO PUT IT ALL BACK TOGETHER AGAIN!! So, the Friends crew, captured husband, and site rangers got back to work. Results on the next page!

Work! Work! Work!



**Work!
Work!
Work!**



Chris and Thomas install the jewelry display case

Work! Work!



Friends President Kay Krehbiel restocks the bookshelves.

TA DA - DONE!



Camina, our friendly greeter and fashionista, welcomes visitors to the Museum Bookstore and Gift Shop

You probably notice that the general design of the shop is not much different from the way it looked before the repair work. That's because the long bank of large shelves simply will not fit anywhere else, and the checkout counter is tethered to power outlets and phone jack access. However, there are some small but major changes to the checkout area: We have more room! Just a few inches outward made a big difference in accessibility, space, and design. Plus an unknown power outlet was revealed, previously hidden behind a storage cabinet. Yea!! And, of course, the mess behind the wall is gone.



About the Friends

Board of Directors:

Kay Krehbiel – President
Maria Smith-Vega – Vice President
Lorraine Archuleta – Secretary
Liz Vallejos – Treasurer
Sandra Qureshi – Board Member
Virginia Hawthorn – Board Member
John Larson – Board Member

Contact Us:

Friends of El Camino Historic Trail Site
PO Box 399
San Antonio, New Mexico 87832
575-854-3600 – Ranger's Office
575-854-3679 – Museum Shop

Find Us:



Take I-25 to Exit 115, which is about half way between Socorro and Truth or Consequences. Turn east for a very short distance and then right (south) on Highway 1 about 1½ miles. At the Rest Stop (which cannot be accessed from Highway 1), turn left (east) onto the paved road three miles to the El Camino Trail Site. Informational signs and picnic rest stops are along the way to the large parking lot at the Museum entrance.

Open 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM Wednesday-Sunday
(Closed on major holidays.)

The purpose of the Friends of El Camino Real Historic Trail Site is to promote the activities of the Trail Site, and to support its educational efforts. The Friends is exclusively charitable and educational within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code.

The Five Flags at El Camino Real Historic Trail Site



©Jerry Sintz

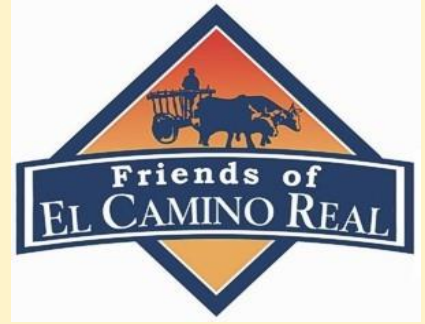
Five flags fly in the breeze against a beautiful blue New Mexico sky. But why five flags? The purpose of displaying them is to honor the states and countries through which El Camino Real made its way. It was truly an international highway: *El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro - The Royal Road to the Interior Lands*.

First, going from left to right, is the United States flag, of course. Next is the flag of Spain, which ruled what is now a major part of the southwestern United States for over 200 years. In the center is the flag of Mexico, which took over the area after the 1821 revolution, holding it until the end of the Mexican-American War in 1848. The flag with the red Zia sun symbol at the center is the New Mexico State Flag. Finally, at the far right is the Texas State Flag, because the trail just barely passed through a small section of Texas where the trail crossed the Rio Grande at the present location of El Paso.



Replica of a Spanish Carreta – the heavy wooden cart used for carrying freight on El Camino Real.

Friends of El Camino Real
Historic Trail Site



Membership Application

☐ Memberships January 1 to December 31

☐ \$5.00 discount after July 1

<i>Date:</i>				<i>Please check here if this is a renewal:</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Member Name:</i>					
<i>Family Names for Family Membership:</i>					
<i>Mailing Address:</i>	<i>No./Street Address</i>				
	<i>City</i>		<i>State</i>		<i>Zip</i>
<i>Emails:</i>	<i>1:</i>		<i>2:</i>		
<i>Phones:</i>	<i>1</i>		<i>2:</i>		

Select Your Interests (X)

	Contact me about planned giving.
	Let me know about volunteer opportunities at the site.
	I want to receive emails about current events & issues at the site.
	I want to help preserve the historic Camino Real Trail for the future.

Select Membership Category (X)

	\$20	Individual		\$25	Family
	\$15	Senior/Student		\$200	Business/Sponsor

Thank You!

Friends of El Camino Real Historic Trail Site, PO Box 399, San Antonio NM 87832
For information: 575-824-3600