

Agencies collaborate to upgrade trails



PHOTOS BY MONICA LASALLE

Breaking new ground

Members of NATO and Teens, Inc. Youth Corp. plugging away on the "New 10 trail". The trail has been designed to be more equestrian friendly than Aspen Alley.

Monica LaSalle Nederland

It was a hot, hazy morning. Bicyclists and hikers were securing their vehicles as they prepared to embark on a journey to take advantage of the morning, a cool breeze beckoning them towards winding trails and breathtaking mountain vistas full of wildflowers and the remains of high country splashes of color. Meandering along the 342 trail, there is evidence of work afoot; suddenly there are pick axes and shovels glittering in the sun as they are swung through the air, biting into the untouched landscape.

Clouds of dust rise with each swing as Nederland Area Trail Organization (NATO) members Mandy Papich, Steu Swineford and Scott Papich hammer away at the ground to blaze a new bike trail where once there was none. Further across the meadow, Stefani Davidson of Teens Inc. and her hard-working crew sweat and toil away in the high grass.

The Youth Corp received a grant

from the National Forest Foundation to work the trails on West Magnolia, as well as to pull noxious weeds from the area. They sought partnership with NATO and the Forest Service and began work earlier this summer as part of the Magnolia Non-Motorized Trails Project (a Forest Service approved multi-use trail system). According to Reid Armstrong, Public Affairs Specialist for U.S. Forest Service, Teens Inc. and NATO have been part of the planning for the Magnolia Trails Project and began work earlier this summer once the project was approved for implementation. Aaron Dressel, NATO board member and Forest Service liason, says in June the group worked on repairing drainage issues on the Hobbit 2 trail.

The past two Saturdays found them teaming up to create the "New 10" trail, which is part of a plan to decommission parts of an adjoining trail that had excessive eroding and wash out.

For further information, please see <https://www.fs.usda.gov>, or even better,

visit the trails. The trail system offers multiple levels of terrain and features for the more advanced rider, as well as a peaceful mountain walk through the trees. Wildlife abounds in the form of swooping birds, chittering squirrels, and hunting foxes. All the hard work these folks are doing will not only ensure visitors will encounter wildlife, but that the landscape will remain a spectacular

habitat for all creatures whether on legs or two wheels.

For more information on NATO or to become a member, email info@nederlandareatrails.org to join the mailing list or check for updates on current activities on Facebook pages *Nederland Area Trails Organization*, *Peak to Peak Trail Conditions*, or the website nedtrails.com.



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