



## **My Turn**

# **Protect the Williams Lake Trail**

**PATRICIA QUINTANA**

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The trail from the Village of Taos Ski Valley to Williams Lake is one of the most well-known and loved in Northern New Mexico. In the summer and fall thousands of hikers of all ages and abilities enjoy the pleasant walk through the conifer forest to the sparkling alpine lake cradled below our state's highest peaks. In the quiet winter months, when the trail is blanketed in deep snow, it is crisscrossed by ski and snowshoe tracks.

What is not well-known by most trail-users is that the lower sections of this popular trail cross private land, and that public access to Forest Service Trail 62 which climbs to Williams Lake and beyond, is made possible only through the generosity of a private landowner.

Taos Land Trust is now working with the landowner to create a conservation easement which would guarantee permanent public access to Forest Service Trail 62, Trail 67, and Williams Lake.

The creation of a conservation easement includes a rigorous review process by federal and state agencies. During the review, the landowner and the land trust must demonstrate to the government that the creation of this conservation easement provides significant public benefit.

This is where you come in. If you believe, as we do, that permanently protecting the route to Williams Lake is a significant benefit to you, your family and the general public let your voice be heard. Letters in support of this conservation easement project and the permanent protection of public access to the Williams Lake Trail will help us document the public benefit.

Supporting letters should be sent to the Taos Land Trust. We will submit them along with the project approval application in August. Important note: be sure to include your return address in your letter of support. If you have any questions, please call our office at 751-3138.

Please address your letter to: John H. Bemis Cabinet Secretary New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department 1220 South St. Francis Drive Santa Fe, NM 87505 Please mail your letter to: Taos Land Trust PO Box 376 Taos, NM 87571 Email correspondence is welcome. Send your email of support to: [Williamslaketrail@taoslandtrust.org](mailto:Williamslaketrail@taoslandtrust.org).

For more information on the Williams Lake Trail Preservation Project visit our web site at [www.taoslandtrust.org](http://www.taoslandtrust.org). Or call the Taos Land Trust office at (575) 751-3138. Thank you for your help.

*Patricia Quintana is the executive director of the Taos Land Trust.*

