

K'É Community Trails

CROWNPOINT

● COMMUNITY

● HEALTH

● EDUCATION

● CULTURE

“Connecting Communities Through K'é.”

K'É Community Trails

INTRODUCTION

“Connecting Communities Through K'É.”

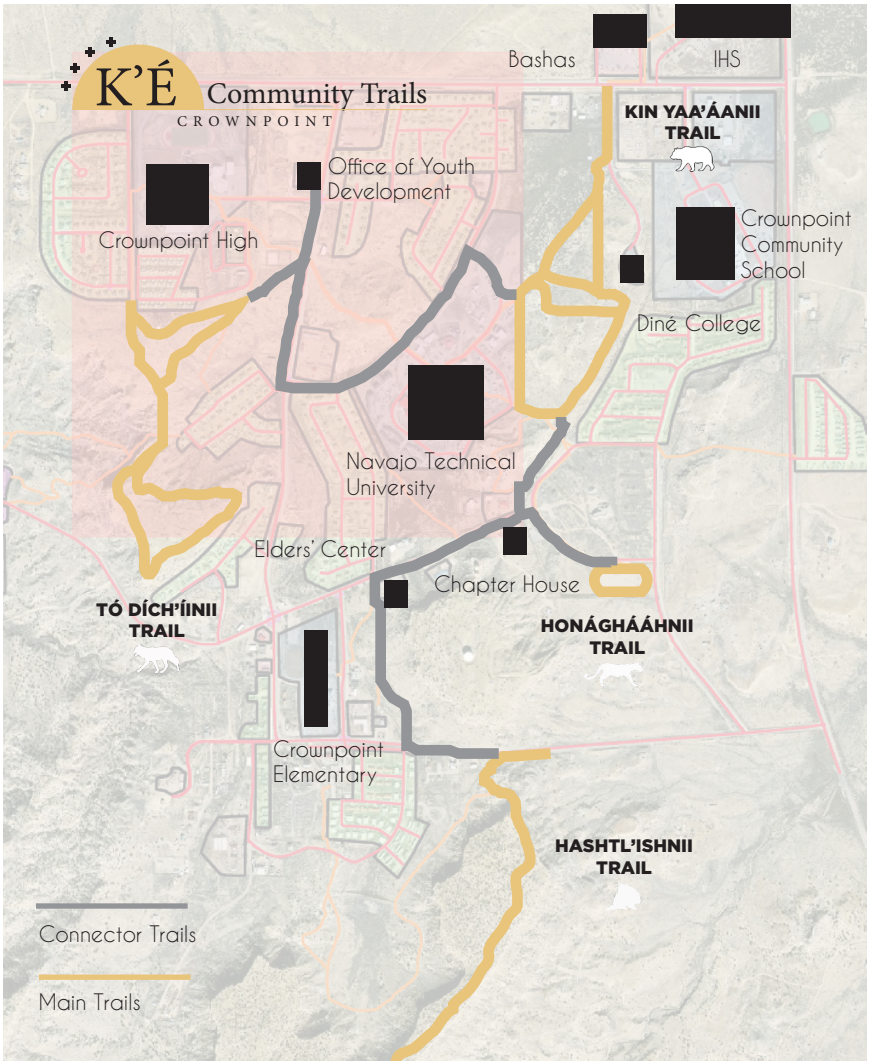
K'É refers to the establishment of familial and clan relationships, but the word expresses a deeper and more complex concept than this translation would suggest...Another important attribute that k'É fosters within a Navajo person is a respect for all living things. This includes oneself, nature, the environment and other Native American people who live near Dinétah.”

-Evangeline Parsons Yazzie, Ed.D.

Trails are unique in that they contribute to community cohesiveness while positively impacting the health, education, and culture of a region. The proposed K'É Community Trail seeks to reestablish relationships in Crownpoint through inclusive community participation and collaboration. The potential impact would be an enjoyable trail that would improve accessibility to local resources and improve the physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being of Crownpoint's residents. The three objectives of the trail are to:

- Establish a community-based trail network that formally connects Crownpoint's various community centers, such as schools, housing, the Chapter House and shopping centers.
- Maximize the trail's functionality to improve health, enhance educational learning, and celebrate the diverse cultural and environmental history of the region.
- Address safety and environmental concerns that could be impacted by the development of a trail network.





The current trail system in Crownpoint is a result of widespread foot traffic without consideration for the areas ecological impacts and natural culturally significant sites. The project will assess the informal trails and determine appropriate remediation and development.

Above is a map that identifies proposed trail network, which spans across the heart of Crownpoint. Several town centers are also listed.

K'É Community Trails

COMMUNITY

Community engagement is a crucial component to the K'É Cultural Trail, as it is the community who will frequent the trail most often. Community members are encouraged to contribute to the trail's design and will be informed of each phase of its development to encourage cohesiveness. In addition to community input, the project will also rely on the expertise of students and educators from Navajo Technical University and Diné College, who will provide needed resources to help in the trail's development. Once complete, the trail will serve as an outdoor classroom for each institution. The trail will also draw on the knowledge of community elders to reestablish a healthy connection with the trail's natural landscapes and the region's layered history.

The K'É Community Trail will seek to link its function with other community attractions, like Chaco Culture and the Rug Auction of Crownpoint. In doing so, the trail will help contribute to Crownpoint's reputation as a global destination, and potentially serve as a stimulator to the local economy by attracting tourism dollars (see back page).



The K'É Community Trail would eventually include recreational trails to historical sites like Towering House (above). An educational trail could also be developed that functions with the Rug Auction of Crownpoint and introduces the public to traditional plants and their use in creating dyes for hand-woven rugs (right).



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HEALTH

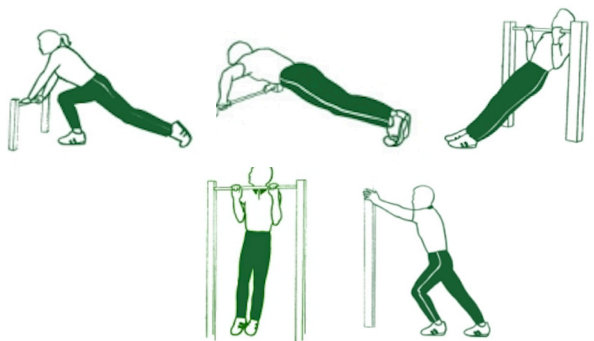
Trails have benefits other than providing community cohesiveness. They are also beneficial to our physical, emotional and spiritual health, and well-being. Nationally, physical health has been in decline, with 36.5% of adults categorized as obese. Diabetes was rare among Native Americans until the middle part of the 20th century but has become one of the most common diseases among Native American tribes today.

Physical activity is a cost effective tactic to counter each health concern, and could also help in minimizing the impact of other health problems, including cancer and heart disease.

The four leading causes of death on the Navajo Nation:

- 1. UNINTENTIONAL INJURIES**
- 2. CANCER**
- 3. HEART DISEASE**
- 4. DIABETES**

The trails will be able to provide physical activity opportunities in its design with equipment like shown below.



According the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services CDC 2017 Report, American Indian adolescents are 30% more likely than whites to be obese. American Indian adults are more than 50% more likely than whites to be obese. Exercise equipment like shown above can be integrated into the trail to help combat obesity.

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EDUCATION

Natural and cultural conservation is an integral part of Diné lifestyles and teachings, yet universities are just now developing interdisciplinary curriculum that incorporates Diné design and construction into coursework. Technology will be incorporated into the K'É Community Trail network and be used to develop a better understanding of these teachings.

To successfully implement this project, Navajo Technical University has agreed to support faculty from several departments in development of interdisciplinary curriculum for a class that integrates the following programs:

- Building Information Modeling
- Environmental Science and Natural Resources
- Geographic Information Systems
- Diné Studies

The project will also engage the community's primary and secondary schools, developing programs that promote youth engagement and activity. Elders will play a crucial role in the project, giving the trail a connection to the heartbeat of the past.





BRINGING THE TRAIL TO LIFE: AUGMENTED REALITY TECHNOLOGY

Augmented Reality (AR) is a new technology that promises to engage the next generation of hikers in outdoor recreation and stewardship by providing information about their surroundings in ways that they can relate through texts, audio/visual, animation, and 3D models.

In relation to the K'é Community Trail, AR will provide easy access to learn about traditional Diné and western geology, archaeology, natural habitats, astronomy, multicultural stories, names of hills and mountains, and medicinal plants. It could also help specific zones, such as those that distinguish Navajo Nation land parcels from BLM land parcels and private land parcels.

The AR will also help preserve the Diné spoken and written language by appealing to youth who might otherwise not have the opportunity to hear or read Diné language. In this case, AR will serve as a historic preservation mechanism that also contributes to language and culture revitalization. Signage could also be developed in AR.



Identifying constellations could be another function made possible by AR.

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CULTURE

The reclamation of Navajo lands with the K'É Community Trail is both a physical and spiritual endeavor, and we plan to move forward in culturally respectful ways according to the input of the local community. Cultural preservation is an important aspect of Diné culture and links knowledge about our past with our future. The trails will work with NTU and Diné College in hosting lectures and workshops that promote a better understanding of the trail's features and relation to traditional Diné ways of thinking.



CONTRIBUTING TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN CROWNPOINT



Pueblo Bonito Boarding School in 1917. Classrooms in center with dorms on left and right with overhouse and laundry room on far left. Photo courtesy of D. Ance and Leonard Perry.

Cultural capital lends itself to tourism, which plays to the advantage of the K'É Community Trail. Roughly 78% of all leisure travelers in the U.S. participated in cultural heritage activities while traveling. These figures have resulted in about 188.3 million visitors each year, who spend an average of \$994 per trip. If the trail could capture a portion of these dollars with trails that depict historical building sites (left), it would attract tourism that could benefit the local community.