

TRAIL BUILDERS

The Satch Cowan Trail was designed from existing, boot-worn paths along with new segments developed to create a loop trail. Both rim routes have been used by Western Area residents and others for many years. As a school project-based learning experience designed to help students and the community recover from the Cerro Grande fire, sixth-grade students from Mountain Elementary rebuilt the Quemazon Nature Trail in 2000 and 2001. They moved on to improve the south rim trail in 2003, relocating the trail along the edge of Los Alamos Canyon to take advantage of views opened up by the fire. In 2012, a new group of sixth-graders built the missing segment to connect the trailhead with the south rim. The north rim route was improved in the summer of 2012 by the Los Alamos Family YMCA's Environmental Service Corps.



Participants in the Los Alamos Family YMCA Environmental Service Corps removing a fallen tree from the north rim trail segment.

WHO WAS SATCH COWAN?

Born on a Missouri farm, Helen "Satch" Cowan came to Los Alamos in 1945 to work for the Manhattan Project as a physical chemist. She met her future husband, George Cowan, while working in Chicago, but they married in Santa Fe and settled in Los Alamos. Satch engaged in all kinds of athletic activities in her mountain hometown: skiing on Pajarito Mountain, swimming in the town's pools, and mostly hiking through the forests and across the mesas of the Pajarito Plateau. On her own, with friends, and with her hiking group "The Wednesday Irregulars," Satch spent more than 65 years exploring the Los Alamos area on foot. Over the years George and Satch enriched the lives of many town residents with their warmth and financial support. Satch was particularly fond of projects that brought young people outdoors and was an important benefactor of the Los Alamos Family YMCA's YMCA Environmental Service Corps. When Satch died in the summer of 2011, George and dozens of her friends created a memorial fund to establish a "Satch Cowan Trail."

LOS ALAMOS COUNTY PARKS

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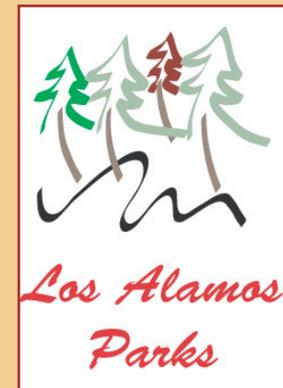
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LOS ALAMOS
TRAIL NETWORK

SATCH COWAN TRAIL

DEDICATED TO
THE MEMORY OF
HELEN "SATCH" COWAN
OCTOBER 22, 2012



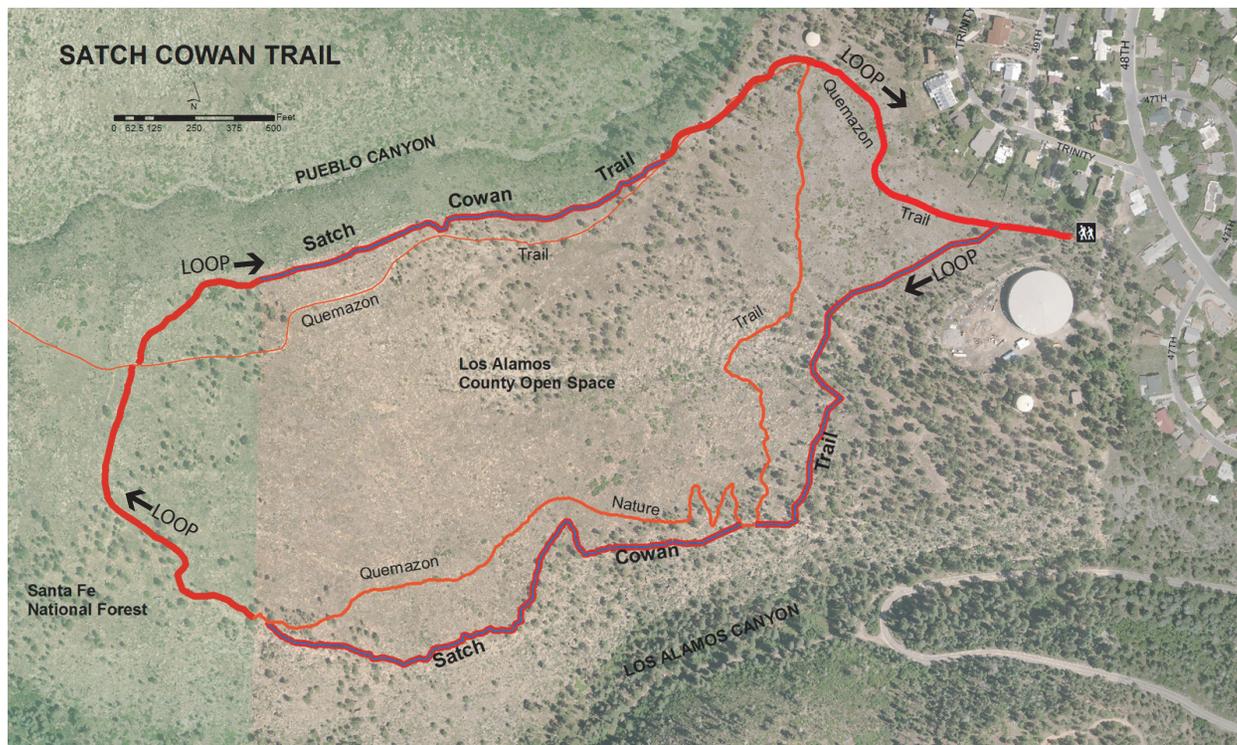
A RUGGED ROUTE

The Satch Cowan Trail provides access to stunning vistas along most of its route. Although the trail is wide and offers safe passage, it traverses near cliffs and steep drops. Hikers should watch their footing; parents walking with children should keep watch and help them along. Because Satch was a rugged hiker, we left some sections of the trail steep and rough—we know she would like that.

FINDING THE TRAIL

At the intersection of Diamond and Trinity near the Los Alamos Medical Center, enter the Western Area and travel about a half mile on Trinity Drive. At the intersection of 48th Street and Trinity turn onto Trinity and immediately make another left onto a narrow paved road heading toward a water tank. The trailhead is about 100 feet on the right.

SATCH COWAN TRAIL



HIKING THE TRAIL

From the Quemazon Trailhead, travel about 100 feet up the wide dirt road behind the information kiosk and bear left onto the trail at the “Satch Cowan Trail” sign. Traverse through a meadow filled with wildflowers and shrubs, and in a few minutes come to another road. Turn left onto the road and in a few yards, turn right onto the marked trail. Meander uphill on a rocky slope and in 0.2 miles, join the Quemazon Nature Trail. In a moment, around the first turn to the right, the Satch Cowan Trail bears left and steeply ascends the mesa along the rim of Los Alamos Canyon. Enjoy grand vistas of the canyon and the Sierra de los Valles to the west, gaining about 200 feet in elevation along the rim.

About a mile from the start, rejoin the Nature Trail near marker 27. Bear left onto the Nature Trail, continuing the climb up the mesa. Enter the Santa Fe National Forest at an unmarked boundary. Near here the trail swings to the north, with great views of a post-Cerro Grande fire sapling forest to the west. (The trees were planted by volunteers as seedlings in the spring of 2001.) Cross the main Quemazon Trail and use a rock cairn to help you locate an informal trail that leads to the Pueblo Canyon leg of the Satch Cowan Trail. Now heading downhill, enjoy sweeping views of Pueblo Canyon, Los Alamos, the Rio Grande rift, and the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. The trail meets the main Quemazon Trail near a water tank. Turn left on the wide trail, pass the water tank, and follow the road back to the trailhead.