



Building Trails for the Future

by Sabrina Carlson

On November 19, 2016, 10 students from Mrs. Titus' high school class in Kanab, Utah got to participate in building some new mountain bike trail near the Squaw Trailhead at the north end of town. The students were able to work alongside representatives from their city, the local newspaper, the Kanab Cycling Club, and IMBA (International Mountain Bicycling

Association) to help bring to life new recreation opportunities in Southern Utah.

Kanab, which is located on the route to Gooseberry Mesa, St. George and Zion, has often been a popular place for tourists to make a stop for gas and coffee before heading out to other destinations. But this northernmost Arizona Trail Gateway Community has scenery to rival any of the more admired destinations. With a handful of historic hiking trails to its credit, and a thriving outdoor recreation community that is growing all the time, it now has 17 new miles of mountain bike trail and has been flagged with much more to come.



A discussion on sustainable trail design.

Before getting to work on the trail, I had the chance to present to the students the concept of sustainable trail design, and what a wonderful opportunity it is to be part of the inception of a brand new trail. We talked about the importance of outsloped, contoured trail design, and the many problems that can arise from trails with inadequate drainage or too steep of a grade. We highlighted the vital part trails have played in the history of the beehive state, and the role these trails will play in the future development of the economy in their region.

After learning more about how to properly build a long lasting trail and why it matters, we grabbed our tools and got to work. We removed excess debris from the tread, chipped away at problematic rocks, trimmed vegetation, and did our best to compact the loose sand that makes up much of the soil near Nephi Pasture.

After all our hard work we were treated to a tour of a recently completed section of trail. With an IMBA trail building expert pointing out what was working, and what things he would suggest changing on the next round of maintenance, it was a great learning opportunity for us all!



We have a feeling that Kanab is soon to be much more to the outdoor recreation community than a place for gas and a cup of coffee. The youth and adults are abuzz with excitement and possibility, and that enthusiasm is spreading fast!

Improving drainage in a tricky spot.

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Trimming vegetation.

