

# RUIDOSO NEWS

## River trail gets contract

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Colorado firm to design first phase

It's been a long time coming, but the first contract on the Ruidoso River Walk Trail was awarded by Village Council last month.

Acting on a staff recommendation, a contract was awarded to Loris & Associates of Lafayette, Colo., to design and construct a trail from Two Rivers Park through Midtown.

The project, the first phase of a longer trail, is funded with a \$202,100 federal grant through the Billy the Kid Scenic Byways. The village will be fiscal agent for the grant. The byways' share will be \$50,525, which Laura Doth said will come primarily from in-kind work, equipment and materials from the village street department. Doth served on the committee with Councilor Jim Stoddard that revitalized efforts to see a trail created after years of talk and little action.

Councilor Ron Hardeman, who sat on the proposal evaluation committee, said at the council's July 28 meeting the firm selected a trail specialist that has completed a significant amount of work in Colorado.

"We felt they would give us something unusual and creative," he said. "This will be their first in the state and will be their showcase piece in New Mexico."

The terrain for the trail varies greatly in different sections. The trail task force proposed several different points of access, displays of public art, benches, activity points, interpretive signage and other opportunities for the users along the river,

which is considered a major tourist attraction.

Stoddard said the choice of the Colorado firm was not "conservative."

"We took a chance and hope for the results," he said.

Doth said nine good proposals were submitted and she's "very excited" about the team chosen.

"This is what they do," she said. "They approach challenges from a creative angle. We have some steep terrain and I think they will bring new eyes and ideas."

The motion was to begin negotiations and to award the contract.

Doth noted that a request for funding for the second phase of the trail was submitted and one for the third phase will be ready for the next funding cycle.