IN THE FAR REACHES OF WEST TEXAS ALONG THE RIO GRANDE LIES ONE OF THE STATE’S MOST BIO-DIVERSE COMMUNITIES, FOR WILDLIFE, PLANTS, AND PEOPLE ALIKE. El Paso, which got its name from being the “Paso del Norte” – the Northern Pass – is home to thriving mountain, river, and desert ecosystems, as well as a rich binational culture. Serving a population of 2.7 million in the region between El Paso and their sister city of Juarez, Mexico, the Paso del Norte (PDN) Trail has a vision to improve environmental, economic, and public health conditions for Texans, and their neighbors, from all walks of life.

This project is a community-driven, collaborative effort to develop a county-wide trail in El Paso County. The roughly 68-mile span of the PDN Trail is divided into five distinct districts, each broadly defined by their unique geographical, historical, and cultural context, as well as various amenities and attractions. The PDN Trail provides essential connections for community members to businesses, attractions, parks, and downtown areas, including the University of Texas at El Paso, Ascarate Park, the University Medical Center, and the El Paso Zoo. Connector trails and loops provide additional access to natural areas and outdoor spaces such as Franklin Mountains State Park and the Rio Grande River.

Accessible trails connect people to nature, which positively affects their health and promotes a conservation mindset. The collaborative team working on the trail strives to ensure the PDN Trail is a trail for everyone, meaning it is safe and accessible to community members of all ages and abilities. Upon completion, the trail will provide greater opportunities for walking, hiking, and biking for users of all abilities to connect in the ecologically and culturally diverse border region of Texas. Trail systems also bring economic value to their communities through increased property value, economic opportunities for local businesses engaging with the trail, improved public health, and overall greater “livability” for residents.
Successful completion of this trail project requires continued community buy-in and stakeholder support. Each completed segment helps the PDN Trail build momentum as trail partners gather data and research in order to demonstrate to the community that the trail can not only enhance connectivity, support healthy lifestyle choices, and increase access to natural spaces, but can also help propel the region forward in terms of vibrant economic activity.

**MISSION**

The goal of Paso del Norte Trail is to create a regionally significant landmark that promotes active transportation, preserves the history and culture of the region, highlights the Rio Grande river, supports economic development and ecotourism, provides educational and volunteer opportunities, and makes healthy living the easy choice for the unique, binational community of El Paso.

**IMPACT**

- **68 miles** of connected trails when completed
- **Additional habitat** for burrowing owls, pollinators, edible and native plant life, and other wildlife incorporated along the trail, bringing nature closer to the city
- **Sustainable stormwater management** through installation of bioswales and other water management projects along the trail
- **Binational, multi-state, regional reach** through Texas, New Mexico, and Mexico
- **Improved quality of life** through reduction in urban heat, increased transportation options, and safer outdoor access

**PARTNERS**

In April 2018, the PDN Trail Advisory Committee was established to provide recommendations for the implementation of the Paso del Norte Trail. The PDN Trail Advisory Committee is chaired by the former TxDOT Chairman Ted Houghton and includes members from both the public and private sectors. Collaborators for this project include the Paso del Norte Health Foundation, City of El Paso, County of El Paso, El Paso County Water Improvement District #1, El Paso Water, El Paso Metropolitan Planning Organization, Camino Real Regional Mobility Authority, Medical Center of the Americas, and Creosote Collaborative.

**NEEDS**

PDN Trail was selected for Texan by Nature Conservation Wrangler based on the project’s positive impact to people, prosperity, and natural resources. Through the program, Texan by Nature is working with the PDN Trail to address the following needs:

- **Increased funding** from public and private partners for trail construction and trail amenities
- **Increased local business support** through options such as Friends of PDN Trail, event hosting, or trail advertisement
- **Additional research** studying the impact trail access has on public health, transportation, and the local economy
- **Greater public awareness** of trail access points and the benefits of trail usage for their community
- **More volunteers** to assist with natural resource projects along the trail to enhance conservation benefits

For more information visit texanbynature.org or contact us at programs@texanbynature.org or 512-284-7482.