



CASE STUDY: Borderland Mountain Bike Association

El Paso, Texas — The Chihuahuan Desert offers bikers and hikers panoramic and picturesque vistas of the Franklin Mountains. And, as one of the most biologically diverse desert ecoregions in the world, it is also home to over 1,000 unique plant and animal species. It is no surprise that the area is renowned for its trails¹.

On weekends, dozens of denizens can be seen at any one of the 30 local trailheads. While riders and trekkers know to bring plenty of water, sunscreen, and light snacks, any respite from the desert sun is a welcome sight to adventurers returning from a long day's excursion — especially during a record-setting hot summer².

This is one of the reasons the city council of El Paso requested a Sunbolt solar charging station be purchased for the Lost Dog Trail Head. The Sunbolt CampusXL table, by CarrierClass Green Infrastructure, is equipped with two solar panels with a 530-watt solar array capacity and two extended shade panels to shelter users from the desert sun.

“The Sunbolt makes the trailhead more official and adds a certain flavor to the site.” - RICK BONART, BORDERLAND MOUNTAIN BIKE ASSOCIATION.

“Our city councilman wanted a charging station for the Lost Dog trailhead restoration,” explains Rick Bonart, one of the members of the Borderland Mountain Bike Association who found the Sunbolt online as well as obtained the funding for the table.

The Sunbolt also serves as a rendezvous point for biking clubs and groups who meet to help clean and maintain the trail. With the Sunbolt, people can now charge their phones before or after enjoying a ride, hike, or dog-walk along the trail. The table also includes LED lighting for continued use at night for travelers returning late.

Realistically, accidents and emergency scenarios can happen while on the trail. Installing Sunbolt solar charging stations at trailheads helps to ensure that trail users have a fully charged mobile phone in the event that they need to place an emergency call. While technology should never be a substitute for experience, a charged mobile device can still offer many benefits even if your signal is blocked by the mountains. Cellphones can be used as an emergency flashlight or compass, and now Google Maps can even be used offline.

“When the council told me about the idea, I searched the web and immediately found the Sunbolt,” Bonart recalls. “When I showed it to them, they said ‘That’s exactly what we’re looking for.’” To secure funding for the table, Bonart reached out to former associates at El Paso Electric who agreed to finance the table in exchange for including their logo on the table’s bench.

When asked about working with CarrierClass Green Infrastructure, Bonart responds, “As we moved forward in the process, it became clear that [CCGI] is still a young company. But they were very understanding and willing to answer any questions or assist with any issues we faced.” “The installation of the Sunbolt went much smoother than expected,” adds Bonart.

The city of El Paso is currently designing four new trailheads that will provide easier access the scenic Franklin Mountains and they are looking to install charging stations at each location.

1. http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/programs/public_lands/deserts/chihuahuan_desert/index.html
2. <http://kfoxtv.com/news/local/2017-could-be-hottest-on-record-in-el-paso>