


NATIONAL SCENIC AND
RECREATION TRAILS



Authorized by the
National Trails System Act
Public Law 90-543, October 2, 1968



PRODUCED BY
BUREAU OF OUTDOOR RECREATION
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GARDNER B. HENNING, *Secretary*
AND THE
FOREST SERVICE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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TRAILS FOR EVERYONE

Trails have played a vital part in America's tradition. From early Colonial days through modern times, Americans have sought trailways as a means of reaching a particular destination or for pleasure and relaxation.

Walking for pleasure is one of the favorite outdoor recreation activities of Americans.

A 1965 survey of the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation found that walking for pleasure had increased faster in the previous 5 years than any other major outdoor recreation activity.

That survey found that Americans walked for pleasure one billion and thirty million times during the summer of 1965, or an increase of 82 percent over 1960. Projections show Americans will walk for pleasure one billion, five hundred and thirty-nine million times in 1980 and more than two and a half billion times in 2000.

Washington, D.C. — March, 1970

Trails are needed for many types of outdoor recreation. In addition to walking, trail uses include hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, and motorcycling.

Once trails abounded nearly everywhere but as the Nation became more urbanized, many of them were preempted for other needs. Today, with higher incomes, more leisure, and greater mobility, Americans need more space for outdoor activities, especially near urban areas. Trails can provide for some of our most pressing outdoor needs.

That is why Congress, acting on its initiative and on recommendations of Federal and State agencies and outdoor enthusiasts, established a National Trails System.

A statement of policy in the Act (Public Law 90-543) that established the National Trails System declares:

"In order to provide for the ever-increasing outdoor recreation needs of an expanding population and in order to promote public access to, travel within, and enjoyment and appreciation of the open-air, outdoor areas of the Nation, trails should be established (1) primarily, near the urban areas of the Nation, and (2) secondarily, within established scenic areas more remotely located.

"The purpose of this Act is to provide the means for attaining these objectives by instituting a national system of recreation and scenic trails, by designating the Appalachian Trail and the Pacific Crest Trail as the initial components of that system, and by prescribing the methods by which, and standards according to which, additional components may be added to the system."

NATIONAL SCENIC TRAILS

National scenic trails are authorized and designated only by Act of Congress.

Such trails by their very nature must be worthy of national scenic designation. Their scenic, historical, natural, or cultural qualities must be superior to those of other trails in the country. Because of their special characteristics, national scenic trails should be capable of promoting interest and attracting visitors throughout the United States.

National scenic trails are designed for hiking and other compatible uses. The National Trails System Act prohibits the use of motorized equipment on these trails.

Route Selection

National scenic trails of historical importance should adhere as accurately as possible to their principal historic routes.

The routes of national scenic trails should be located to provide for maximum outdoor recreation potential, as well as for the enjoyment of scenic, historic, natural, or cultural qualities of the areas through which they pass. As far as practicable, national scenic trails should avoid highways, motor roads, mining areas, power transmission lines, commercial and industrial developments, range fences, and other activities that could detract from scenic interest.

Access

National scenic trails should be provided with adequate public access through connecting local or regional trails. Access should be located at reasonable intervals to provide for trips of various lengths.

Placement

National scenic trails should be primarily land based.

Length

National scenic trails should be extended trails, usually several hundred miles or more in length.



Continuity

National scenic trails should be continuous for their entire length.

Congress already has established two trails as national scenic trails: the Appalachian Trail in the East and the Pacific Crest Trail in the West.

Appalachian Trail

The Appalachian Trail is approximately 2,000 miles long and extends generally along the Appalachian Mountains from Mount Katahdin, Maine, to Springer Mountain, Georgia.

As pointed out in *Trails For America*, a nationwide trails study published by the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, the Appalachian Trail traces its origin to an article entitled, "The Appalachian Trail, A Project for Regional Planning," published in the *Journal of the American Institute of Architects* in October 1921. The author of that article, Benton MacKaye, set forth the need for a trail that would be readily accessible to the people living in the metropolitan centers along the Atlantic seaboard.



Earlier regional trail networks along the proposed route had been constructed with the help of volunteer hiking associations. The Appalachian Mountain Club operated trails in New Hampshire which dated from 1876. The Dartmouth Outing Club trail system in New Hampshire, the Long Trail in Vermont, and the trail system in the Palisades Interstate Park in New York also served many outdoorsmen.

In 1922, the first mile of the Appalachian Trail was cut and marked in Palisades Interstate Park. The trail was completed in August 1937 by private groups working with the Forest Service and other public agencies.

Volunteer groups, organizations, and individuals carried on a major effort to make the trail a reality. The Appalachian Trail Conference, a federation of these groups, was made a permanent body in 1925 to unify and coordinate future efforts. The work of many recreationists dedicated to the concept of the Appalachian Trail made the project possible and brought the trail to the unique position of being the longest continuous marked recreation pathway in the world.

Traversing regions of varied charm, the Appalachian Trail has won the devotion of trail enthusiasts. Harold Allen, a

writer who movingly described the Trail, caught their feelings in his well-known description:

“Remote for detachment,
narrow for chosen company,
winding for leisure, lonely for
contemplation, the Trail leads
not merely north and south but
upward to the body, mind and
soul of man.”

The Secretary of the Interior has delegated administrative responsibility for the Appalachian National Scenic Trail to the National Park Service.



Land Ownership In Miles Along The Appalachian Trail

Location	Federal	State	Private	Total
Maine	0	20	260	280
New Hampshire	71	9	74	154
Vermont	26	19	89	134
Massachusetts	0	55	28	83
Connecticut	0	24	32	56
New York-				
New Jersey	0	94	65	159
Pennsylvania	0	154	60	214
Maryland	0	7	30	37
West Virginia-				
Virginia	254	62	146	462
Tennessee-North				
Carolina	255	8	80	343
Georgia	76	0	2	78
Total	682	452	866	2,000





**PACIFIC CREST
TRAIL**

Pacific Crest Trail

The Pacific Crest Trail, a trail of approximately 2,350 miles, extends from the Mexican-California border northward generally along the mountain ranges of the west coast States to the Canadian-Washington border near Lake Ross.

As early as 1920, the Forest Service began surveys of trails along sections of the Cascade Mountains in Washington and Oregon and the Sierra Nevada ranges of California. The idea of an esthetically pleasing route for foot and horseback travelers extending the full length of the crest from Canada to Mexico was conceived by Clinton C. Clark of Pasadena, California, and first proposed in 1932. Soon after, the Pacific Crest Trail Conference was organized with Mr. Clark as chairman of the Executive Committee to seek recognition of the concept and to promote actual construction.

The Pacific Crest Trail includes 457 miles in Washington, 406 miles in Oregon, and 1,450 miles in California. Its northern end is at International Monument 78 on the Canadian-United States border. On the Mexican border, the trail ends at International Boundary Marker 251.

The portion of the Pacific Crest Trail in Washington is known as the Cascade



Crest Trail. In Oregon it is known as the Oregon Skyline Trail. The several segments in California are known as the Lava Crest Trail, the Tahoe-Yosemite Trail, the John Muir Trail, the Sierra Trail, and the Desert Crest Trail.

The trail follows the ridges of the Cascades and the Sierra Nevadas amid spectacular mountain formations and awesome vistas. In high country resplendent in scenic beauty, the hiker encounters glacial moraines and icefields, lava flows and basalt columns, alpine forests and deserts, wilderness, wildlife, and trout streams galore. In many places, before the trail ends at the Mexican border, he will be exhilarated by the grandeur of Nature and enveloped in the same solitude of open spaces experienced by his pioneer forebears. In other places, he will see the hand of man at work harvesting or regenerating a forest, setting his sheep to graze on a mountain meadow, or in combat with natural enemies of the forest—fire, insects and disease that could destroy it if unchecked.

Eighty percent of the trail is on Federal lands, including 25 National Forests and 6 National Parks. The remainder is largely on stretches of private lands lying within or between authorized boundaries of the National Forests and National Parks.



The Secretary of Agriculture has delegated administrative responsibility for the Pacific Crest Trail to the Forest Service.

Land Ownership in Miles Along The Pacific Crest Trail

Location	Federal	State	Private	Total
Washington	434	1	22	457
Oregon	385	0	20	406
California	1,022	26	402	1,450
Total	1,842	27	444	2,313

Other National Scenic Trails

In Public Law 90-543 Congress designated 14 other routes for study and possible inclusion in the National Trails System.

Following are descriptions of those routes:

(1) Continental Divide Trail, a 3100-mile trail extending from near the Mexican border in southwestern New Mexico northward generally along the Continental Di-

vide to the Canadian border in Glacier National Park.

(2) Potomac Heritage Trail, an 825-mile trail extending generally from the mouth of the Potomac River to its sources in Pennsylvania and West Virginia, including the 170-mile Chesapeake and Ohio Canal towpath.

(3) Old Cattle Trails of the Southwest from the vicinity of San Antonio, Texas, approximately 800 miles through Oklahoma via Baxter Springs and Chetopa, Kansas, to Fort Scott, Kansas, including the Chisholm Trail, from the vicinity of San Antonio or Cuero, Texas, approximately 800 miles north through Oklahoma to Abilene, Kansas.

(4) Lewis and Clark Trail, from Wood River, Illinois, to the Pacific Ocean in Oregon, following both the outbound and inbound routes of the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

(5) Natchez Trace, from Nashville, Tennessee, approximately 600 miles to Natchez, Mississippi.

(6) North Country Trail, from the Appalachian Trail in Vermont, approximately 3,200 miles through the States of New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, to the Lewis and Clark Trail in North Dakota.

(7) Kittanning Trail from Shirleys-

burg in Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania, to Kittanning, Armstrong County, Pennsylvania.

(8) Oregon Trail, from Independence, Missouri, approximately 2,000 miles to near Fort Vancouver, Washington.

(9) Santa Fe Trail, from Independence, Missouri, approximately 800 miles to Santa Fe, New Mexico.

(10) Long Trail, extending 255 miles from the Massachusetts border northward through Vermont to the Canadian border.

(11) Mormon Trail, extending from Nauvoo, Illinois, to Salt Lake City, Utah, through the States of Iowa, Nebraska, and Wyoming.

(12) Gold Rush Trails in Alaska.

(13) Mormon Battalion Trail, extending 2,000 miles from Mount Pisgah, Iowa, through Kansas, Colorado, New Mexico, and Arizona to Los Angeles, California.

(14) El Camino Real from St. Augustine to Fort Caroline National Memorial, Florida, approximately 30 miles along the southern boundary of the St. Johns River.

Studies of the Continental Divide and Potomac Heritage Trails already have been started by the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation in cooperation with the Forest Service and other Federal, State, and local

agencies. Studies of the remaining 12 trails are expected to be completed by 1976, the Nation's 200th anniversary.

NATIONAL RECREATION TRAILS

Designation

National recreation trails are established and designated by the Secretary of the Interior, or by the Secretary of Agriculture where lands administered by him are involved, with the consent of the Federal agency, State, or political subdivision having jurisdiction over these lands.

Recreationists will be able to use trail bikes, snowmobiles, horses, bicycles, and other travel equipment on many national recreation trails; such use depending upon the location and characteristics of the individual trails.

Location

A national recreation trail should be located where it can be available to large numbers of people.

While it is not a prerequisite that a national recreation trail be scenic, significant features of the area through which the trail passes should be incorporated or at least made an adjunct of the trail.



Use and Availability

National recreation trails provide a variety of outdoor uses in or reasonably accessible to urban areas. The term "reasonably accessible" is interpreted to mean available for day use or within about two hours travel of urban areas.

Length

The length of a national recreation trail may vary, depending on its use and purpose.

The trail must be continuous. It may be short, perhaps only one-half mile in length, and utilized for such purposes as a wheelchair trail for the handicapped or as a trail for the blind. A national recreation trail also may involve many miles, such as a canal towpath, and incorporate urban-rural characteristics.

Readiness

Before any trail can be designated as a national recreation trail it must be ready for public use.

Administration

Before a trail may receive national recreation status, the agency that is to administer it must provide proof in writing to the appropriate Secretary that the trail will be available to the public for at least 10 consecutive years. Supporting docu-

ments, such as property titles, leases, and easement agreements, must be submitted as substantiating evidence.

Management

The prospective administrator of a national recreation trail must submit to the appropriate Secretary a trail management plan that covers such items as fire protection, maintenance, police surveillance, rules and regulations, and related matters.

Design

National recreation trails may be designed and constructed commensurate with the type of use desired—whether for hikers, horsemen, bicyclists, or motorcycle riders. Where practicable, they may serve multiple uses.

Its paths may run through stream valleys and their flood plains; utility rights-of-way, such as natural gas lines and power lines; abandoned railroad or streetcar rights-of-way; easements for underground cables; areas around reservoirs, irrigation, or transportation canals and lateral banks; levees, flood dikes, jetties, and breakwaters.

Although the primary purpose of a national recreation trail is for outdoor recreation, other uses such as power lines, sheep driveways, and logging road opera-



courage the planning of recreation trails in connection with planning for metropolitan and other urban areas under the Housing Act of 1954 and under the urban open-space program of the Housing Act of 1961.

The Secretary of Agriculture is directed by the Act to encourage States, local agencies, and private interests to establish State and metropolitan area trails.

Such trails may be designated and suitably marked as parts of the nationwide system of trails by the States, their political subdivisions, or other appropriate administering agencies with the approval of the Secretary of the Interior.

The Act also directs the Department of Defense, Department of Transportation, Interstate Commerce Commission, Federal Communications Commission, Federal Power Commission, and other Federal agencies with jurisdiction or control over use, abandonment, or disposition of properties that might be suitable for the National Trails System to cooperate with the Interior Department and the Agriculture Department in assuring that such properties are considered for trail use.

Persons interested in stimulating development of trails near where they live

can obtain information from their local trail club, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, or similar organizations, or their State park or forestry department. Information may also be obtained by writing to:

Secretary
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240
Attention: Bureau of Outdoor
Recreation
or

Secretary
Department of Agriculture
Washington, D. C. 20250
Attention: Forest Service