SUMMARY

Figure 1 Marchers in downtown Selma on March 21, 1965

Figure 2 Aerial view of marchers along US Highway 80

Introduction

The Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail (Trail) responds to congressional designation of the Trail and the requirements of the National Trails System Act of 1968 (NTSA), as amended. This document identifies issues, evaluates alternative strategies, and proposes a comprehensive management and use plan for the Trail.

In August 1995, the Governor of Alabama designated US Highway 80 between Selma and Montgomery as a Scenic Byway. In January 1996, the Alabama Department of Transportation recommended that the Federal Highway Administration grant All American Road status to US Highway 80. The All American Road is the highest designation a road can receive under the Federal Highway Administration's National Scenic Byways Program.

In November 1996, Congress, acting under the NTSA, created the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail (NHT) along US Highway 80. The NTSA is intended to promote the preservation of scenic and historic travel routes and to "encourage and assist volunteer citizen involvement in the planning, development, maintenance, and management, where appropriate, of trails (Sec. 2.c)." The NHT designation is based on the historic significance of the 1965 Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights March.

The 54 mile trail begins at the Brown Chapel AME Church in Selma, Alabama and follows the route of the 1965 Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights March, which traveled through Lowndes County along US Highway 80 to Montgomery, culminating at the Alabama state capitol.

Historians view the 1965 Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights March as one of the last great campaigns, and the emotional peak of the Modern Civil Rights Movement that began in the 1950s. The events associated with the march brought the issue of voting rights to the forefront of the national political agenda and raised the nation's consciousness about African-Americans' struggle for equal rights.

Five months after the march, Congress passed the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which established the legal right to vote for all Americans and forever altered the regional and national political landscape. The Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights March remains one of the most significant civil rights protests in American history.

The CMP is shaped, in part, by the planning requirements set out in section 5(f) of the NTSA (see Appendix 3). The document focuses on the Trail's purpose and significance, resource protection, visitor experience and use, and long-term administrative objectives. It also serves as the document that coordinates the broad-based policies, guidelines, and standards for administering the Trail in a manner consistent with protection, interpretation, and appropriate public use of Trail resources.

While the National Park Service (NPS) is responsible for the administration of the Trail, many elements of the CMP reflect cooperation among Federal, state, and local agencies, as well as nonprofit trail organizations—the entities that form the core of any partnership for national historic trails.

PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR ACTION

Figure 3 Marchers gather in Montgomery

Figure 4 Rally at the capitol steps in Montgomery, March 25, 1965

Purpose of the Comprehensive Management Plan

The Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail commemorates the route taken by marchers during the March 21 through March 25, 1965 Voting Rights March. (See Figures 5 and 6) The march between the City of Selma, Alabama, and the state capitol in Montgomery was a watershed event in the Modern Civil Rights Movement, eventually leading to passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act and the transformation of the political landscape in the American South and the nation as a whole.

This plan sets management objectives for the Trail by providing a blueprint for administration, resource protection, interpretation and visitor experience, use of the Trail, and site development and marking. The plan further defines roles and responsibilities for the agencies, organizations, and local interests that will serve as partners with the NPS to carry out those objectives.

Need for the Comprehensive Management Plan

Legislative and administrative direction

National Trails System Act

The NTSA institutes a national system of recreation, scenic and historic trails. Historic trails are extended routes that follow nationally significant, original routes of travel as closely as possible. To fulfill the purpose of the NTSA, the Federal government generally does not acquire and develop continuous rights-of-way along the designated trail. The trail may instead be a series of individual, but coordinated, management units designed to provide the public with opportunities for recreation and historic interpretation.

To qualify for national historic status, a trail must meet all of the following criteria:

- It must be a trail or route established by historic use, must be historically significant and should generally follow the historic route.
- It must be of national significance.
- It must have significant potential for public recreational use or historical interest.

National historic trails may contain campsites, shelters and related public-use facilities, along with other uses that do not interfere with the nature and purposes of the trail. Connecting or side trails may provide additional points of public access to other recreation, scenic or historic resources.

Only those resources that are on Federally owned lands and meet the criteria are included as Federal protection components of a national historic trail. When the land included in a trail right-of-way falls outside of Federally administered areas, the NTSA encourages the use of written cooperative agreements with landowners; state, local, and private organizations; and individuals to provide the necessary trail rights-of-way, or to acquire lands. The NTSA also allows for the implementation of land use practices compatible with the trail purposes for property within or adjacent to trail rights-of-way.

The NTSA encourages volunteers to plan, develop, maintain, and manage, where appropriate, trails with provisions for technical assistance from Federal agencies.

To satisfy the planning requirements set forth in the NTSA legislation, the CMP should at a minimum include the following components:

- specific management objectives and practices
- identification of all significant resources to be preserved
- model cooperative agreements
- trail marking requirements
- identification of carrying capacity

- plan acquisition or protection, by year
- general and site-specific development plans, with costs
- alternative management scenarios to foster public knowledge of the Trail and help visitors understand the importance of sites along the Trail
- provisions for appropriate use, including opportunities to re-trace the Trail
- certification procedures for non-Federal Trail sites, segments, or interpretive programs
- roles and responsibilities of partners

The legislation establishing the Trail specifically directs the Trail partners to provide such historical context as would help visitors to understand that the Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights March, rather than being an isolated event, was integral to the African-American quest for civil rights and the evolution of American democracy. (See Appendix 2 for a copy of the legislation establishing The Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail and Appendix 3 for a link to the NTSA on the Internet.)

Selma to Montgomery Trail

In 1990, Congress directed the Secretary of the Interior to study the route traveled by voting rights protestors in 1965 from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, and to assess the eligibility, feasibility, and desirability of authorizing the route as a national historic or scenic trail. The resulting NPS *National Trail Study*, completed in 1993, recommended that the 54 mile route become a component of the national trail system and be administered by the NPS.

The study examined the feasibility of several alternatives for future management, use, and development of the Trail, ranging from preservation of the entire corridor and 16 significant sites to a commemorative trail that interprets sites without acquisition. The study identified a commemorative alternative as the preferred alternative.

On November 12, 1996, Congress established the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail, which follows the march route beginning at Brown Chapel AME Church in Selma, Alabama, traveling through Lowndes County along US Highway 80, and ending in Montgomery.

Alabama Department of Transportation plans

In August of 1995, the Governor of Alabama designated US Highway 80 between Selma and Montgomery as a Scenic Byway. In January 1996, the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) recommended that the route become an All American Road, the highest designation a road can receive under the National Scenic Byways Program, which is administered by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

In 1997, after Congress established the Trail, the FHWA and the NPS entered into an agreement to coordinate and consolidate efforts for the Trail's development. The ALDOT completed a *Master Plan* for the route in July 1999. Based on public comments, state and local government input, development costs, and environmental considerations, the ALDOT plan chose a commemorative alternative similar to the recommendation of the 1993 NPS *National Trail Study*.

Meanwhile, the NPS began the planning process for the CMP. In 1999 the Southeast Regional Office of the NPS published the *Alternatives Summary,* which identified Alternative C as the preferred alternative for management and implementation of the Trail. Alternative C built upon previous planning efforts, including the ALDOT plan, and received an important endorsement from the Trail's Citizens Advisory Council.

In 2000, the NPS suspended the planning process for the CMP while ALDOT and the Alabama State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) negotiated a plan for roadway treatments of US Highway 80. In March of 2003, a Memorandum of Agreement among ALDOT, the FHWA, and the SHPO was

approved. (See Appendix 1 for a copy of the Memorandum of Agreement.)

Long-range interpretive plan

Concurrent with the CMP, the NPS developed a *Long-Range Interpretive Plan* (LRIP) that recommends interpretive and educational programs consistent with the CMP's preferred alternative. The LRIP defines the overall vision and long-term (7-10 years) interpretive goals of the Trail. The LRIP is closely tied to the CMP and provides direction for the Trail's interpretive activities.

The NPS also developed a *Wayside Exhibit Proposal*, which identifies the purpose, design, and potential graphics for trailwide exhibits.

Environmental impact statement

Broad-reaching Federal actions related to implementation of CMP recommendations require an environmental impact statement (EIS) to inform decision-makers of the potential impacts of the preferred alternative and other management alternatives.

The EIS addresses:

- the potential related environmental impacts of alternatives
- protection measures for any high-risk cultural, natural and socio-economic resources

The EIS describes four alternatives, including the preferred alternative, and discusses their potential environmental impacts. The preferred alternative—Alternative C—constitutes the comprehensive management plan for the Trail.

Figure 5 Regional map

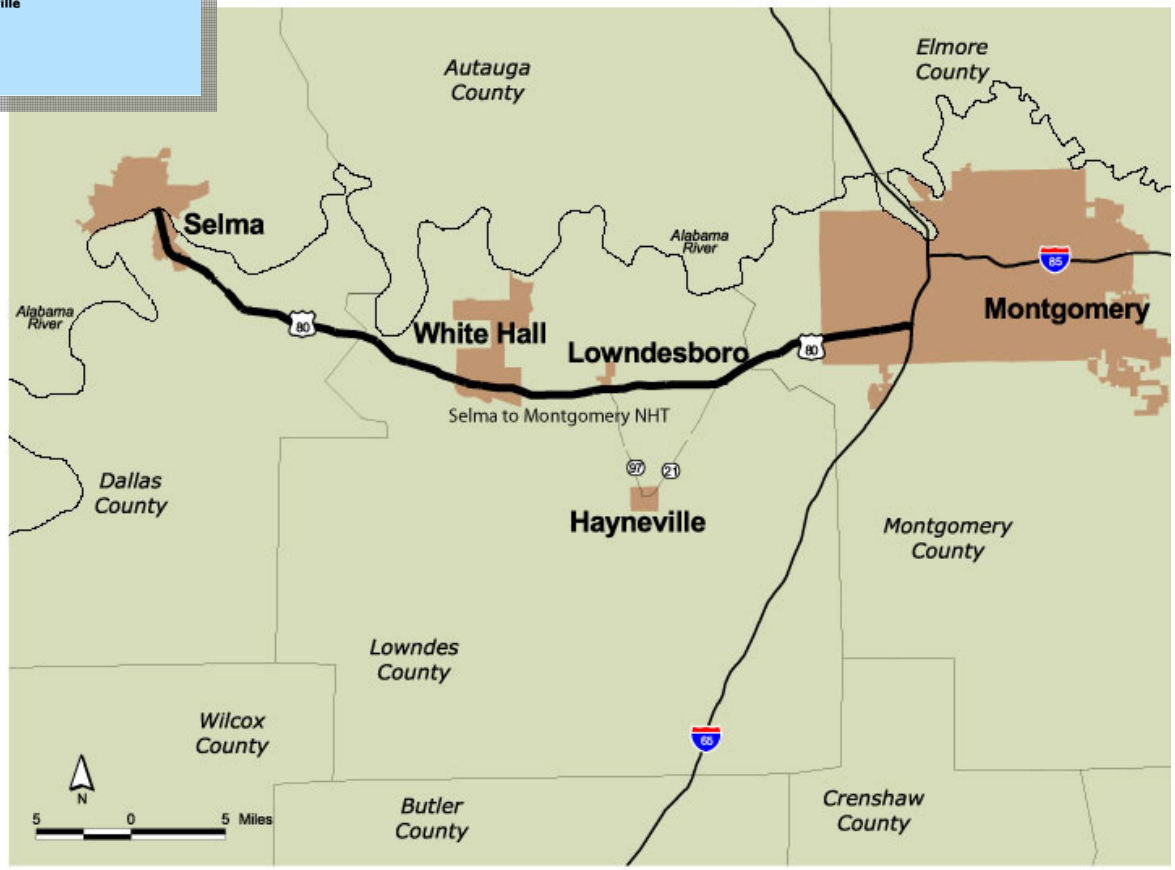

Figure 6 Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail

Figure 7 Commemorative crossing of the Edmund Pettus Bridge

Planning Process and Public Involvement

Interagency cooperation

From the beginning of the planning effort, this process has focused on the need to establish strong working relationships with partners from Federal, state, and local agencies, the Trail associations, and private landowners. The NPS began consultation and coordination with governmental agencies and private organizations during its 1993 *National Trail Study*. (See the Consultation and Coordination section for a listing of all groups consulted).

Workshops

The NPS consulted with various stakeholders during preparation of the 1999 *Alternatives Summary*, including the National Historic Trail Friends Groups in Selma, Lowndes County, and Montgomery, the National Historic Trail Citizens Advisory Council, the Federal Highway Administration, Alabama Department of Transportation, and the Alabama Historical Commission. (See the Consultation and Coordination section for a listing of workshop dates).

The Alabama Department of Transportation conducted extensive public participation activities as part of the 1999 *Master Plan*, including public meetings and workshops in each of the three counties, as well as personal interviews with organizers and march participants.

The purpose of the NPS and ALDOT meetings was to identify primary interpretive themes and high potential sites, as well as generate goals and objectives for the Trail.

The NPS continued consultation in July 2003 by conducting public workshops in Selma, Lowndes County, and Montgomery. The planning team briefed the public about the draft management alternatives and recent trail developments and listened to comments and concerns from the public regarding management of the Trail. Comments and suggestions have been incorporated into the plan whenever possible. (See Appendix 4 for public comments recorded at the workshops.)

Consultation with Federal, state and local partners

During the planning process for the CMP, team members met with various Federal, state, and local partners to discuss Trail developments and gather input on management issues. Partners included the Federal Highway Administration, elected representatives of the State of Alabama, state agencies representing tourism, transportation, and historic preservation, local colleges and universities, local jurisdictions, volunteer organizations and friends groups.

Trail management personnel conducted one meeting with the Advisory Council, which provides input into development of the Trail and helps to develop alternatives and recommendations; and three meetings with various friends groups. Trail management personnel also met with local and state tourism organizations, including Alabama Travel & Tourism, the Selma Chamber of Commerce, Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA), the Alabama Department of Transportation, and Alabama Historic Commission to discuss promoting the Trail, the Black Belt region, and Alabama as a destination.

The emphasis of tourism development collaboration has been to improve quality of life and ensure a healthy economy through job development, business development, neighborhood revitalization and public improvements, social services, and revenue enhancement, particularly for low and moderate income residents in the Black Belt region. (See the Consultation and Coordination section for a listing of individuals consulted).

Members of the planning team also contacted representatives of the Poarch Creek Native American tribe to determine if there were any tribal issues to be addressed in the CMP. No issues were identified as a result of this consultation.

Resource inventory

The NPS conducted various site visits to understand resources along the Trail and develop an inventory of the cultural landscapes within the corridor. Members of the planning team also performed site visits as part of the CMP development,

which included efforts to photograph high potential resources and meet with local experts representing Federal, state, and local concerns.

Trail Purpose, Significance, and Interpretive Themes

Trail purpose

Trail purpose is the reason or reasons for establishing a trail area. These statements are based on the Trail's enabling legislation and legislative history. Purpose statements reflect basic assumptions about the Trail and the ways in which it should be used and managed. The following statements are based on the Trail's enabling legislation and legislative history.

The purpose of the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail is to:

- Commemorate the events, people, and route of the Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights March of 1965 as a reminder of the right and responsibility of all Americans to participate fully in the election process and maintain vigilance in protecting our right to vote.

- Identify, preserve, and protect the historic route and resources that inform the world about the Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights March of 1965.

- Document, record, and interpret the story of the Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights March of 1965, including its antecedents and aftermath, in the context of the larger human and civil rights movement.

- Enhance, nurture, and develop broad partnerships between the National Park Service, state and local governments, educational institutions, and various citizen groups to achieve the Trail's other purposes.

Trail significance

The significance statements capture the essence of the Trail's relationship to our natural and cultural heritage and explain the importance of trail resources. Knowing the Trail's significance helps to set resource protection priorities, identify primary interpretive themes, and provide desirable visitor experiences. Statements of significance describe the distinctive values of the Trail's resources, why these values are important within a national context, and why they contribute to the Trail's purpose.

Significance statements for the Trail are:

- Events associated with the march from Selma to Montgomery and with what came to be known as "Bloody Sunday" sent shock waves around the world, raised the nation's consciousness, and convinced political leaders that the time had come for voting rights legislation.

- The Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights March was the major catalyst for passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Marchers brought the issue of voting rights to the forefront of the United States political agenda, and their peaceful means won broad support for their cause.

- Passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 five months after the Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights March achieved the legal right to vote for all Americans, and forever changed the political life of the South and the United States as a whole. The Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights March remains one of the most significant civil rights protests in American history.

Trail resources

Resources associated with the Trail include eight structures adjacent to the march route that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places and twelve designated historic districts whether within or close to the designated trail corridor.

Other resources include portions of US Highway 80 between the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Dallas County and Caney Creek in Montgomery County and the pastoral cultural landscapes visible from the roadway. The Affected Environment section more fully describes these resources.

Interpretive themes

Interpretive themes are based on a site's purpose, significance, and primary resources. These themes are the key stories or concepts that people should understand after visiting the Trail. The themes provide the foundation for all interpretive programs and media developed for the Trail. They do not include everything the Trail may interpret, but they do cover those ideas that are critical to visitors' understanding of the Trail's significant resources.

The interpretive themes for the Trail are:

- The Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights March resulted in the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which enfranchised citizens previously denied the right to vote. This act changed and continues to change the political, economic, and social fabric of American society.

- Fighting against the evils of bigotry and hatred, individuals risked their lives and livelihoods for the right to vote, bringing greater value and meaning to the democratic process.

- Courageous and committed individuals, working through a variety of community institutions and nationally recognized groups, played pivotal roles in bringing about vast change to the social and political landscape of American society for present and future generations.

- Through the use of nonviolent protest, ordinary people worked to mobilize and sustain the Modern Civil Rights Movement, a movement that became an example for other worldwide democratic movements.

- The struggle of African-Americans to realize the dream and right of full citizenship as guaranteed by the United States Constitution forced this country to live up to its ideals of equality for all.

- The cultural landscape and environment is reflective of the social, economic, and legal systems that resulted in the Modern Civil Rights Movement, images of which helped shape the national reaction and response.

- Selma, Alabama was selected as the starting point of the Voting Rights March of 1965 because of a convergence of several crucial political, social, and economic factors, which were inclusive of its location/geography.

- The efforts of those involved in the Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights March are part of the continuum within the civil and human rights struggle of African-Americans from slavery to modern times.

Opportunities and Challenges

Goals for the visitor experience

Visitor experience goals are statements that describe those fundamental educational and recreational opportunities that the Trail facilitates through its visitor services and interpretive programs. In planning facilities, interpretive media, and personal services, Trail staff and partners will work to create and enhance opportunities for the important experiences that should be available to visitors.

Visitors to the Trail would have opportunities to:

- be immersed in the march story, both physically and emotionally, by walking, bicycling, and/or driving at low speeds along portions of the original route
- understand the march and its people, places, and events in the context of the Modern Civil Rights Movement and the evolution of citizenship rights in the United States
- easily access orientation and activity planning information
- experience the essence of the Trail and its stories at several locations, or without actually visiting any of the sites
- choose from a range of activities that vary in length and depth
- be inspired to be an advocate for civil and human rights in their own communities
- understand the contrast between the social and political climate of the Modern Civil Rights era and today
- learn about all of the Trail's themes through a variety of well-maintained interpretive media and quality interpretive services
- experience first-hand accounts from the people who were part of the 1965 voting rights marches
- reflect on the Modern Civil Rights era, the people, and social injustices
- experience authentic places related to the Trail's history and significance
- understand the various trail corridor designations

Planning issues

Discussions with Federal and state authorities, trail organizations and the public conducted as part of the 1999 NPS *Alternatives Summary* and the ALDOT *Master Plan* process identified a series of relevant planning issues for the Trail.

The CMP will provide a framework for addressing the following issues within the context of the Trail's purpose, significance, mission, and goals. The issues relate to the physical layout and treatment of the march route and its appropriate uses, trail resource protection, visitor experiences, and the management roles and responsibilities of partnering entities.

Compatible uses

Much of the Trail is along US Highway 80. Under the March 2003 MOA, modifications to US Highway 80 would allow local auto access along original portions of the roadway, raising issues about highway safety and compatibility with other recreation uses.

- How should these segments be managed and used?
- Should the Trail consist of parallel sections designated for different users, such as pedestrians, motorists and bicyclists?
- How can highway safety standards be maintained on other portions of US Highway 80 without compromising the historical integrity of the Trail?

Resource protection

The NPS will work to acquire specific high potential route segments or high potential historic sites as authorized under the NTSA. Resource protection measures in addition to direct acquisition will require creativity and cooperation among Trail partners.

- How can the Trail accommodate new growth that is compatible with its historic character?
- How might the Trail's high potential sites and segments be better protected if they become threatened or allowed to deteriorate?
- If a significant site along the Trail is proposed for a possibly threatening land use, what actions should be taken to minimize adverse impacts?
- How can historic viewsheds and landscapes along the corridor be protected?

Visitor experience

The Trail's events took place in the relatively recent past and many of the march's participants are still living.

- What should be the breadth of interpretive stories and themes for the Trail?
- How can the Trail sensitively reflect the concerns and experience of march participants?

Administration and management

As authorized under the NTSA, the NPS is the administering agency that exercises responsibilities for the Trail. Such responsibilities include coordination among and between agencies and partnership organizations in planning, marking, certification, resource preservation and protection, interpretation, cooperative/interagency agreements, and financial assistance to other cooperating government agencies, landowners, interest groups, and individuals.

Various government and private entities that own or manage lands along the Trail are responsible for management activities that may include inventorying of resources and mapping, planning and development of trail segments or sites, compliance, provision of appropriate public access, site interpretation, trail maintenance, marking, resource preservation and protection, viewshed protection, and management of visitor use.

Interagency cooperation is desirable and has proven to be a productive and efficient means of implementing the NTSA by improving communication and achieving better administration and management of the Trail and associated resources.

- What should be the role of the NPS in administration and operation of the Trail?
- What is the formal approach to providing NPS technical assistance for the preservation and interpretation of resources?
- What are the strategies for protecting and preserving threatened Trail resources, particularly those at risk due to neglect, development pressure or inappropriate uses?
- What are the strategies for promoting broad public support for the preservation of Trail resources?
- How can the NPS facilitate communication and stimulate cooperation among Trail organizations?

Certification of sites

Several sites that have an important association with the Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights March and other civil rights events are within short driving distance of the Trail.

- What should be the criteria for designating secondary and commemorative sites?
- What should be the roles of the NPS and other agencies in preserving and interpreting secondary and commemorative sites?

Trail Management and Development

Management Objectives

The management objectives for the Trail set the goals for addressing planning issues and maintaining the significant qualities of the Trail. They help to guide the plan's implementation and measure its progress. The proposal and alternatives reviewed in this document are the means by which these goals would be achieved.

Management

The management objectives are to:

- implement the NTSA in conjunction with other authorities through partnerships, whenever possible
- administer the Trail in a cooperative, cohesive, and consistent manner and as a total entity, while incorporating the expertise and input of interested organizations, agencies, and landowners
- facilitate communication among the Trail partners to maintain a comprehensive approach to planning, protection, management, and development
- consult with the Trail's advisory council on matters related to Trail management
- certify Trail sites and segments that meet the criteria described in the comprehensive management plan consistent with the NTSA
- update the inventory of Trail resources, assess conditions, and identify problems on a regular schedule
- centralize administration in a well-staffed office that functions as a clearinghouse for all Federal, state, and local governmental agencies and private interests groups
- provide incentives and stimulate cooperative partnerships
- implement the Comprehensive Management Plan

Resource protection

- encourage the identification, evaluation, and preservation of Trail resources
- encourage uses of adjacent land that are compatible with Trail values and complement the protection and interpretation of Trail resources
- work cooperatively with Federal and state agencies, local governments, landowners, and non-governmental organizations to anticipate, avoid, and mitigate potentially adverse effects on the Trail due to incompatible adjacent activities
- identify research needs and coordinate research
- assist in determining the impacts on historic resources from increased visitor use (carrying capacity models), natural processes, and incompatible uses
- comply with the National Environmental Policy Act, the Endangered Species Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, and other environmental, cultural, and historic preservation laws

Interpretation, visitor experience, and use

- ensure safe and informative experiences for all visitors and Trail users
- allow visitors to retrace the march route and experience the Trail and its resources firsthand
- manage the use of the Trail in ways that conserve its significant values

- provide accurate information and knowledge to enhance the appreciation of the Trail and to protect its resources

- provide adequate orientation to help visitors plan trips, including information on available tour routes, facilities and services

- encourage a unified design theme for signs, exhibits, and public use facilities

- make Trail maps available for planning, protection, and public use

- provide visitors with the widest range of opportunities to experience the Trail and the story of the march

Compatible uses

As part of implementation of the CMP, the Trail partners would promote a variety of passive and active resource-related recreational activities along or near the US Highway 80 corridor. Examples of appropriate activities would include:

- pedestrian and bicycle use along designated original portions of US Highway 80

- bicycling and walking along secondary routes

- sightseeing and picnicking at Trail facilities

- participation in interpretive and educational programs

The Alabama River, just north of the US Highway 80 corridor, features a variety of US Army Corps of Engineers facilities. Water-based recreation opportunities include boating, camping, swimming, and fishing. The Trail partners would coordinate with and build upon the many recreational and education activities that currently exist along the Alabama River. Appendix 7 contains a map of US Army Corps of Engineers recreation sites in the vicinity of the Trail.

Cooperation with partners

Recognizing that activities proposed for lands adjacent to the Trail may significantly affect Trail programs, resources, and values, the NPS will work cooperatively with other entities, including Federal, state, and local governments, neighboring landowners, and non-governmental organizations to anticipate, avoid and resolve potential land use conflicts. The NPS will encourage compatible adjacent land uses by actively pursuing a host of cooperative approaches, including commenting on planning and regulatory processes, briefing the public and appropriate officials about the impacts of proposed land use changes on Trail resources, and participating in cooperative agreements and regional consortiums.

Resource protection

The NTSA formally authorizes the Federal Government to use fee-simple acquisition, easements, land exchanges, and, as a measure of last resort, condemnation to protect trail resources. When necessary, the NPS may directly acquire trail property. The NPS would only acquire:

- high potential sites that provide an opportunity to interpret the historic significance of the Trail

- high potential route segments that offer high quality recreation opportunities or insight into the experiences of the marchers; or

- resources that cannot be protected by other means

The length and number of private property interests along most national trails, however, preclude direct Federal control and management of all Trail components. In recognition of this complexity, the NTSA encourages Federal, state, and local involvement in the development and management of trail sites and segments that fall outside of established Federal areas. Participation by local governments and private interests is, therefore, vital to preserving these resources.

As part of managing the Trail, the NPS would actively support and assist cooperative efforts initiated by residents, city, county and state agencies, local volunteer groups, and others

to protect, develop, and manage Trail resources. Protection strategies could include direct acquisition of properties by state and local public or private interests.

Additionally, Trail partners could seek protection of Trail resources, particularly those sites in Selma and Montgomery, through a variety of Federal, state and local programs, including the National Register of Historic Places, the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street Program, the Alabama Register, the Alabama Main Street Program, the Alabama Cultural Resources Preservation Trust Fund, and individual tax credits and preservation easements.

Visitor experience

Visitor services

The Trail partners should stress the use of experiential exhibits, hands-on interpretive opportunities, children's programming, and interviews with march participants to reflect accurately and sensitively the living history of the Trail.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Trail partners will seek to accommodate visitors with disabilities in non-historic buildings and public spaces associated with the Trail. The Trail partners will provide the highest feasible level of physical access to historic properties for people with disabilities. Any proposed Federal actions that may threaten, destroy or otherwise adversely affect the significance of a historic property will undergo Section 106 compliance in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act. The Trail partners will also adapt visitor services to accommodate visitors with special needs.

Interpretation along the Trail requires safe auto pullouts and adequate parking at designated wayside exhibits and a series of well-designed, visible and consistent signs. In addition to existing trail logo signs, signs should direct travelers from US Highway 80 into Selma and Montgomery and to affiliated sites off of the Trail. Appendix 6 contains examples of trail signs.

Carrying capacity

Increasing visitor use can result in deterioration of fragile historic resources, damage to soils and vegetation, overcrowding and conflicting uses. Carrying capacity defines the appropriate level of use beyond which both the natural and cultural resources of the Trail and the quality of the visitor experience can be adversely affected.

Recent experience suggests that carrying capacity can be most effectively applied through a set of indicators and standards for both biophysical conditions (resource carrying capacity) and visitor experiences (social carrying capacity). Indicators of quality are measurable, manageable variables that define the quality of Trail resources and visitor opportunities. Standards of quality set the minimum acceptable condition of indicator variables.

Indicator variables are monitored over time, and if standards of quality are violated (or are in danger of being violated), management action is required. This approach to carrying capacity is central to contemporary management frameworks, including Limits of Acceptable Change, and Visitor Experience and Resource Protection (National Park Service 1997).

Carrying capacity may be defined by four basic parameters: facilities, physical, ecological, and social. Physical and facility carrying capacities reflect the amount of space that is available in a given setting. The carrying capacity of the Trail is a function of the size of the interpretive centers and the vehicular capacity of US Highway 80. The Lowndes/Tent City Interpretive Center will be 12,235 square feet in size. The Interpretive Center in Selma will be 31,635 square feet. The size and capacity of the Montgomery Interpretive Center is unknown at this time. In an economic impact study of the Trail, the Alabama Bureau of Tourism and Travel and the Auburn University Montgomery Center predict a likely range of 185,000 to 370,000 visitors annually over the next five years.

According to the ALDOT *Master Plan* performed in 1999, future traffic projections indicate that roadway capacity improvements along the following sections of US Highway 80 may be necessary:

- US 80 from Alabama Avenue to State Route 41
- US 80 from the Montgomery Airport to I-65
- US 31 from US 80 to Southern Boulevard

The *Master Plan* notes that development of the Trail as a tourist destination will hasten the need for future capacity improvements along these sections of roadway.

The ecological parameters of carrying capacity include impacts to the plants, animals, soil, water, and air, particularly in the rural areas of Lowndes County. Social impacts focus on issues such as crowding or incompatible activities that detract from the interpretive experience.

The Trail extends more than 50 miles over diverse landscapes, including urban, suburban, and rural areas. Various entities own or manage property along the Trail, creating multiple uses and relatively uncontrolled access. Since use cannot be easily monitored or controlled, it is necessary to develop a meaningful strategy to determine sustainable use levels for individual sites and segments.

The CMP recommends the development of an index of vulnerability to predict overuse. The index would take into account the following factors:

- frequency and extent of special commemorative events, such as the annual Jubilee celebration
- fragility of the resources (age or size of the structure, type of soil and vegetation)
- popularity of a specific site (could vary based on the prominence of the site in the Civil Rights Movement or its association with particular historical figures)
- nature of the predominant use (walking, individual auto use, biking, tour bus)
- ease of access (highway, city street, auto pull out, bike or pedestrian path)
- proximity of highway access point
- proximity to populated areas or other tourist attractions and recreational amenities
- land status (trail right-of-way, highway corridor, private landowner, public facility)

As part of the recommended inventory of resources, each high potential site or segment would be assigned a rating of 1, 2, or 3 (1 meaning little potential disturbance; 2 is moderate potential; and 3 a high probability of disturbance) for each of the factors listed above.

Sites or segments receiving a high score (indicating more vulnerability on the indicators) would be more likely to experience heavy visitation and would be less likely to tolerate intense use without suffering long-term damage. These sites and segments would be potentially threatened and require frequent and careful monitoring. If their condition showed deterioration in excess of established standards, then they could be temporarily withdrawn from public use until a more adequate strategy for their protection could be developed; they could be interpreted from a distance; or other measures could be adopted to protect their integrity.

Trail partners would develop the index as part of an inventory of high potential sites and segments. Trail resources would be rated on two characteristics: existing conditions and the index rating of vulnerability to overuse. Conditions would range from poor to excellent and the index score from high to low. Resources in excellent condition, but vulnerable to damage, should be the top priority for protection. Resources that are both in poor condition and low on the vulnerability index would have the lowest priority for protection.

Implementing the carrying capacity concept also requires a monitoring system to identify where and when trail conditions begin to show evidence of deterioration or overcrowding. General recreation trail standards could be used to establish

monitoring guidelines suitable for the Trail. Monitoring should also include regular (every five years) photographic documentation of the conditions of high potential sites and segments.

Regular monitoring of extensive trail resources is an ambitious undertaking that requires the commitment and cooperation of multiple Trail partners, including Federal, state, and local government agencies and Trail advisory groups. The Trail partners should also conduct periodic visitor use studies to understand visitor needs and identify trends.

Management and cooperation

The NPS expects to have limited funding for the construction and operation of interpretive facilities along the Trail. Other potential sources of funding include the Scenic Byways and All American Road programs, and NPS sources, such as the Land and Water Conservation fund and the various regional Combined Call/Project Management Information System programs. In addition to funding interpretive centers, these sources could help with development of historical markers, interpretive publications, and other programs along the Trail. A 1998 Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Nation Park Service and the Federal Highway Administration demonstrates the commitment between the agencies to coordinate plan program, resources and technical assistance and to participate in and support the planning and implementation of program activities. (See Appendix 8 for a copy of the MOU)

In addition to funding support, the NPS will provide extensive technical assistance to Trail partners, such as local governments, friends' groups and non-profit organizations, and other qualified entities. Friends' groups are voluntary service organizations formed to support, assist, and promote the mission and activities of national parks and trails.

The NPS technical assistance includes information about preservation tools, historical research needed for the design and development of interpretive media and services, and guidance on the rehabilitation and adaptive re-use of historic buildings.

Certification of sites

The NTSA requires the CMP to identify sites and segments along the Trail that help to interpret the Trail's historic significance or provide quality recreational opportunities.

According to the NTSA, "high potential historic sites" are in proximity to the Trail, have historic significance and historic integrity, scenic quality, and minimal physical intrusion.

The term "high potential route segments" means those segments of a trail that offer high quality recreational opportunities and higher than average scenic values. These segments also allow visitors to share the experiences of the original users of the historic route.

Trail sites and segments that are owned by state agencies, local governments, or private entities may become official parts of the National Historic Trail when certified by the NPS. Since the Trail does not pass through any Federally managed lands, all parts of it are eligible for certification.

Certification is a partnership that helps landowners protect and preserve their properties and share them with others. Certification ensures that these sites or segments that are not Federally controlled meet the basic preservation, interpretation, or recreation criteria of the NTSA. The process also requires that facilities comply with expected standards of quality, provide a uniform and coherent visitor experience along the Trail, and maintain a resource protection program. The certification program is one of the most important ways in which the NPS can foster relationships with non-Federal landowners throughout the Trail.

The NPS may classify sites eligible for certification in one of three ways: primary, secondary, or commemorative.

Primary sites tell the story of the march and its participants. To be certified by the NPS, primary sites must meet the following criteria. They must:

- bear a direct relationship to the Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights March and events leading to or resulting from the march
- be within or close to the corridor identified for the Trail
- maintain resource integrity
- be reasonably available for public use
- offer opportunities for interpreting some aspect of the Trail or retracing the march route
- have a managing public agency or private entity that implements a plan for public use and resource protection

Secondary sites tell the story of people, places, or events that are broadly connected to the march and the struggle for civil rights and equality. To be certified by the NPS, secondary sites must meet the following criteria. They must:

- bear a relationship to one of the Trail's interpretive themes
- be within the general region of, though not necessarily adjacent to, the designated trail
- be reasonably available for public use
- have a managing public agency or private entity that implements a plan for public use and resource protection

Commemorative sites are markers, gravesites or monuments that recognize a person, event, place or structure connected to one of the Trail's interpretive themes. To be certified by the NPS, commemorative sites must meet the following criteria. They must:

- bear a relationship to one of the Trail's interpretive themes
- be within the general region of, though not necessarily adjacent to, the designated trail
- have reasonable public access
- have a managing public agency or private entity that implements a plan for public use and resource protection

High potential route segments are trails that connect to the historic corridor. To be certified, route segments must meet the following criteria. They must:

- provide for continuity of public access
- interpret the Trail's historical significance and interpretive themes
- provide for a high quality recreation experience in a scenic setting that helps visitors to understand the experiences of the marchers

The proposed certification process for the Trail is as follows:

- the NPS would pursue early coordination with potential applicants to ensure that they fully understood the site/segment certification procedures and to assist in application efforts
- applicants would be required to document their resources and interpretive programs, as well as environmental and other required compliance procedures
- the NPS would provide technical assistance on issues related to cultural or natural resource compliance, including site planning and interpretation
- the NPS and the applicant would determine management objectives for the site/segment and management responsibilities

The certification partnership is designed to promote flexibility. Landowners might choose to develop a property with signs, sidewalks, and exhibits available for daily visitation. Other landowners might choose to maintain property in a pristine condition and limit visitation to specific groups or researchers. After certification, appropriate Trail information programs would publicize the site or segment as available for public use.

Certification is not permanent, but can be renewed subject to the satisfactory performance of the terms of the agreement. Decertification would result in the removal of a site or segment from the Trail information programs and logo markers.

During the course of the planning process for the ALDOT *Master Plan* and the NPS *Alternatives Summary*, community stakeholders identified a number of sites demonstrating a connection to the Trail's history and interpretive themes. The management alternatives contain descriptions of the high potential primary, secondary, and commemorative sites and segments that could be eligible for inclusion in the Trail.

HISTORY

Figure 8 Marchers along U.S. Highway 80

Figure 9 Formation of the march outside Brown Chapel

Historical Overview

Historians view the 1965 Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights March as the emotional peak of the Modern Civil Rights Movement that began in the 1950s (NPS, 2003). The voting rights campaign was primarily a grass-roots effort, where the actions of ordinary, but courageous, people led to major social change.

In the 1960s, Alabama, like most states in the former Confederacy, restricted the right of African-Americans to vote. County registrars throughout the Black Belt region of Alabama imposed various obstacles to prospective African-American voters, including severe limitations on voting office hours and staffing, difficult literacy tests, and a voucher system that required sponsorship of each new registrant.

In 1964, only 2.2 percent of African-Americans over age 21 were registered to vote in Dallas County, Alabama (NPS, 1993). In contrast, however, neighboring Wilcox and Lowndes counties did not have a single registered voter from the African-American community. The ability of African-Americans, albeit a small number, to register in Dallas County was due in large part to the long-standing efforts of the Dallas County Voters League (DCVL) and its key organizing figure, Samuel Boynton. First formed in the 1920s, the DCVL attracted the interest of civil rights leaders outside of Selma. In 1963, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) arrived in Selma at the request of local civil rights leaders.

The DCVL and the SNCC began voter registration efforts in Selma and surrounding areas with a series of citizenship classes and mass meetings in the spring of 1963 (NPS, 1999). The SNCC efforts intensified in the fall of that year, culminating in a "Freedom Day" in which 300 protesters marched to the Dallas County Courthouse to register. County officials, however, permitted only a small group to join the voter rolls that day.

Passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964 added momentum to Selma's grass roots campaign. Local law enforcement, led in particular by the segregationist Dallas County Sheriff, Jim Clark, met renewed protests with physical violence. In July of 1964, Circuit Judge James Hare prohibited meetings of three or more people in Selma, effectively bringing protests to a halt.

Amelia Boynton, widow of Samuel Boynton, and other members of the DCVL Steering Committee, referred to as the "Courageous Eight," sought to reinvigorate the waning Selma movement. They asked Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) officials to make Selma the focus of their voting rights campaign. In November of 1964, the SCLC accepted a formal invitation from the DCVL. Strong local leadership mixed with the inflammatory style of Sheriff Jim Clark created a promising environment in which to publicize the case for voting rights equality (Fager, 1985).

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. led a rally on January 2, 1965 to energize the voter registration campaign. SCLC staff members soon followed the speech with a series of ward meetings. Protest activities, staged in the spirit of non-violent resistance, continued throughout the winter of 1965.

In a highly symbolic gesture, 105 black teachers led by DCVL President Frederick Reese marched to the Dallas County Courthouse. The willingness of local teachers to risk their safety and careers encouraged other middle-class professionals to participate in the movement. Many school children joined their teachers in the demonstrations as well (Garrow, 1978).

Similar efforts in nearby Marion, the seat of Perry County, drew increasing media coverage. The SCLC held a rally in Marion on the night of February 19, 1965. As the rally ended, Alabama State troopers assaulted attendees, including the family of Jimmie Lee Jackson. A trooper shot Jackson when he attempted to protect his mother from the attack. On February 25, Jimmie Lee Jackson died from the wounds inflicted.

Jackson's death caused outrage within the African-American community in both Marion and Selma. Civil rights leaders began to call for a march to Montgomery to protest his

shooting and seek protection against increasing white violence.

On Sunday March 7, 1965, about 600 protestors left Brown Chapel on Sylvan Street, traveling to Alabama Avenue and then to Broad Street and across the Edmund Pettus Bridge east toward Montgomery. As marchers neared the Selmont area of US Highway 80 and Kings Bend Road, they encountered local law enforcement officers and a "posse" of local whites. The group, wielding tear gas and clubs, violently drove back the protesters. Known as "Bloody Sunday," the attack generated national attention and created an outpouring of support for the voting rights cause.

Dr. King called for another symbolic march in Selma on Tuesday, March 9, while civil rights leaders sought court protection for a third, full-scale march from Selma to Montgomery.

King led more than 1,500 marchers on "Turnaround Tuesday" from Brown Chapel to the point of Sunday's confrontation near the Edmund Pettus Bridge. This time state troopers allowed the marchers to kneel, pray and return to Selma without incident. However, Unitarian minister and march participant James Reeb was struck on the head and killed on the night of March 9.

Subsequently, U.S. District Court Judge Frank M. Johnson ordered state and Federal law enforcement protection for the marchers, and organizers prepared for the 54-mile, five-day march to begin on Sunday, March 21. President Lyndon B. Johnson federalized Alabama National Guard troops and also assigned FBI, Federal marshals and regular Army troops to protect the marchers.

More than 4,000 participants left Brown Chapel in the early afternoon of March 21. Federal troops lined the streets and shielded marchers from angry onlookers. This time the marchers succeeded in walking safely out of Selma and toward Montgomery on US Highway 80.

After the first day, marchers camped at the David Hall property just off US Highway 80. On the second day, participants camped on property owned by Rosie Steele. Robert Gardner hosted the campers on their third night of the trek. On the fourth night, campers stayed on the grounds of the City of St. Jude complex in Montgomery. On this night before their arrival at the capitol, marchers held a "Stars of Freedom Rally," featuring celebrities such as Odetta, Harry Belafonte, Pete Seeger, Leonard Bernstein, and Joan Baez.

On March 25, 25,000 marchers gathered at the capitol for a rally that included Dr. King, Rosa Parks, John Lewis, Roy Wilkins, Whitney Young, A. Phillip Randolph, Ralph Bunche, and Bayard Rustin.

Viola Liuzzo, a Detroit housewife, who volunteered to shuttle marchers back to Selma after the rally, was killed by a Ku Klux Klansman on the way back to Selma. Her death further increased support for passage of the Voting Rights Act.

Media coverage of the march brought national attention to and support for the struggle for equality. In August 1965 President Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act, recognized as perhaps the most significant victory in the struggle for equal rights. The law widely opened political participation by African-Americans in Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia. Federal registrars in Montgomery, Dallas and Lowndes Counties registered thousands of African-American voters in the months that followed.

By November of 1965, approximately 8,000 African-Americans registered to vote in Dallas County. Lowndes County added more than 2,000 African-Americans to its voting rolls, while Montgomery County added about 7,000 (NPS, 1993). Within four years, voter registration throughout the South had more than doubled.

Progress following passage of the Voting Rights Act, however, was not without resistance. In August 1965, a deputy sheriff shot activist Jonathan Daniels, who had been jailed in Lowndes County for participating in a demonstration. The local African-American community also suffered economic hardships. The majority of African-Americans in Lowndes County were sharecroppers or tenant farmers

working on white-owned land. In December of 1965, landowners forced workers off the land in retaliation for registering to vote. Displaced workers took up residence at "Tent City," an African-American-owned plot of land along US Highway 80. Some families lived in tents for as long as two years.

Having won the right to vote, African-Americans continued to organize for fuller participation and representation in the political system. Lowndes County residents formed the Lowndes County Freedom Organization as an independent alternative to the Democratic and Republican parties. Local leaders adopted a black panther as their symbol, thus becoming the first "Black Panther" Party in the country (NPS, 1999).

By the late 1960s and 1970s, African-Americans realized the gains of an increased political voice. The election of African-American representatives for city, county and state-level political office truly fulfilled the promise of equal participation first begun in 1965 (Lawson, 1991).