



# El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail Interpretive Plan

June 2023



## Contact Information

For more information about the El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail Interpretive Plan, contact:

National Trails Office – Intermountain Region  
1100 Old Santa Fe Trail, Santa Fe, NM 87505  
Phone: 505-988-6098

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# El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail Interpretive Plan

June 2023

National Park Service  
Department of the Interior



On the cover: **Point of Rocks**, located in the Jornada del Muerto region south of Truth or Consequences, NM. Courtesy image.

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# Executive Summary

## Context

El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro (Trail) commemorates the earliest Euro-American trade route in the United States. This 1,600-mile route—and its impacts on the natural, economic, social, and political landscape of the American West—spans three centuries of significant change and traces our connections to Mexico and the world beyond. The 404 miles of the El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro that are located in the U.S. are recognized by the government as a National Historic Trail (Trail)—a long distance historic routes that shaped the development of the U.S.

The National Park Service (NPS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) are charged with co-administering the Trail, but own and operate only a small percentage of publicly-accessible sites and have minimal enforcement authority. In planning for the Trail's future, the NPS and BLM must call on and collaborate with scores of Trail partner organizations, individuals, and the visiting public.

## Need for an Interpretive Plan

In 2004, Trail administrators finalized a Comprehensive Management Plan/ Final Environmental Impact Statement that identified management strategies; administrative objectives, policies, and processes; and management actions to fulfill the preservation and public use goals for the Trail. All alternatives considered in that document assumed the continued operation of the El Camino Real Heritage Center—located on BLM land and managed by New Mexico Historic Sites—which operated as a focal point for interpretation and education related to the Trail and its resources. However, the Heritage Center closed permanently in 2017.

This plan was commissioned as a result of that closure and the interagency coordination that ensued. This overarching interpretive plan is intended to provide comprehensive guidance to Trail administrators and partners and outline a unified approach to interpretation for the next 5-10 years.

## Trail Themes

The central interpretive theme and sub-themes developed for this plan apply across the entire length of the Trail (and perhaps beyond). As site-specific interpretive planning efforts are conducted by individual partners, location-specific storylines should tier to the sub-themes and support the overall system of messages that follow. The following themes were developed following a review of existing planning documents and stakeholder input.

### Central Theme

For centuries, people, goods, practices, and beliefs were transported up and down El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro—the natural, economic, social, and political conduit between Mexico City and Santa Fe, New Mexico.

## Sub-Themes

- El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro forever changed an extensive network of Indigenous trails and communities that have existed in and connected to the Rio Grande Valley for thousands of years.
- Periods of conflict and peace shaped El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro.
- Both life-giving and dangerous, the Rio Grande stands throughout time as a vital lifeline for people and ecosystems alike.
- As a route of colonization, migration, religious conversion, trade, and military operations for nearly three centuries, El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro transformed North American history, culture, and landscapes.
- People adapted to meet the dangers and challenges of ever-changing natural and sociopolitical conditions along El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro.
- El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro is a cultural bridge—spanning political boundaries, diverse languages, and environmental obstacles—that connects the past with the present through shared heritage.
- El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro was part of a larger network of trade routes.

## **Summary of Recommendations**

This plan represents the first Interpretive Plan developed for the Trail. It considers how visitors interact with the Trail—visiting with a school group, exploring nationally significant history and personal heritage, driving on highways, visiting and commuting in small towns and villages as well as urban areas, and drawing inspiration for creative expression—and makes recommendations that address the following needs:

- A. Improve inclusivity in interpreting the Trail to visitors
- B. Improve community outreach and audience development
- C. Help Trail administrators and partners collaborate
- D. Expand and refine interpretive media that serves the Trail and reflects contemporary audience needs and characteristics
- E. Implement learning and development opportunities for partners
- F. Increase interpretive staff and assistance
- G. Develop and promote Trail-wide youth and education programming.

These recommendations were synthesized from a variety of input sources—stakeholder workshops and webinars, stakeholder and community surveys, interviews with individual stakeholders and partners, and inventory of existing and potential opportunities.



# Foundation for Planning





# Royal Road of the Interior Land

Added to the National Trails System in 2000, El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail (Trail) commemorates the earliest Euro-American trade route in the United States.

Blazed atop a network of footpaths that tied Mexico’s ancient cultures with those of the interior West, El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro—the Royal Road of the Interior Land—gained recognition as a 16th century travel route that began in Mexico City and, directed by Spain in its control of New Spain, brought priests, soldiers, traders, settlers, and officials to Spain’s norther frontier, disrupting, displacing, and forever changing Indigenous cultures and communities along the way.



**El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro map.**  
NPS.

Once travelers crossed the arid lands north of Ciudad Chihuahua on this frontier wagon road, they followed the wide Rio Grande Valley north into what is now Texas and New Mexico. Many of the historic parajes (campsites) and early settlements created by the Spanish colonists became today’s modern cities of the Rio Grande Valley. Thus, much of El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro has been paved over by our modern network of streets, roads, and highways, with thousands of unsuspecting travelers traversing this route every day.

## Defining El Camino Real

Four main royal roads led to Mexico City during the Spanish period. One ran from Veracruz in the east, another from Acapulco via Guadalajara in the west, a third crossed into Oaxaca from Honduras in the south, and the fourth road traversed the interior of Mexico from Santa Fe in the faraway northern province of New Mexico. These four capitals connected with the viceregal capital in Mexico City, complementing the traditional relationship established under Spanish custom and practice governing royal roads in Europe and the New World. Historically, a Camino Real (Royal Road) is defined as a road that connects Spanish capital and Spanish capital, a distinction not shared with ordinary Spanish villages or [Indigenous communities].

—El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail Feasibility Study  
Environmental Assessment (1997, National Park Service)

Previous: **Yost Escarpment, located in the Jornada del Muerto region south of Truth or Consequences, NM.** Courtesy image.

El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro is recognized throughout the United States of America and Los Estados Unidos de México as a timeless route of trade and cultural exchange. Trade and travel on this trail shaped individual lives and communities, affecting the settlement and development of the greater Southwest. Recognition of this route as an international historic trail commemorates the multicultural connections and interactions between [Indigenous people], Mexican, Black, Spanish, and other European cultures then and now, and contributes in a meaningful way to eliminating cultural barriers and enriching the lives of people along El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro.

—NPS: El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro: History & Culture  
<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationaltrailssystem/index.htm> (accessed April 2022)

This 1,600-mile route—and its impacts on the natural, economic, social, and political landscape of the American West—spans three centuries of significant change and traces our connections to Mexico and the world beyond. As a National Historic Trail, the 404 miles of El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro in the U.S. is recognized along with other long-distance historic routes that shaped the development of the US.

The underlying story of the historic travel route is visible and told at dozens of historically significant sites and segments owned and managed by cooperating federal, state, and local agencies, along with private organizations and landowners. Many of the publicly-accessible visitor contact opportunities associated with El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail are interpretive opportunities that stand on their own as significant features—museums, historic sites, churches, for example—yet collectively stand as witnesses from the era of history embodied by the National Historic Trail.

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*El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro runs through two states—New Mexico and Texas—in the United States, as well as the Mexican states of Chihuahua, Durango, Zacatecas, San Luis Potosi, Aguascalientes, Guanajuato, Jalisco, Querétaro, Hidalgo, Estado de Mexico, and Mexico City.*

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The National Park Service (NPS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) are charged with co-administering the Trail, but own and operate only a small percentage of publicly-accessible sites and have minimal enforcement authority. In planning for the Trail’s future, the NPS and BLM must call on and collaborate with scores of Trail partner organizations, individuals, and the visiting public.



**El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro**  
NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL




**A Multi-Cultural World**

Like today's global economy, international traffic along El Camino Real changed people's lives forever. Food, clothing, languages, religious and spiritual beliefs, architecture, music, art, and ideas about property and society, as well as diseases from Europe, all moved up and down El Camino Real in a continuing multi-cultural exchange.

**Chocolate and Chile Peppers**

Ancestral Pueblo people knew about cocoa beans and chile peppers—but Spanish travelers brought new uses of these native New World foods. The results: sweet, hot, cocoa-flavored milk, and meats and vegetables spiced with bright red peppers. Would you like your chocolate milk stirred and warmed in this 1850s-era Mexican copper chocolatera? Delicious!



*Chocolatera, Casa San Ysidro, The Gutierrez-Mingie House*

**El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro Community**

**Introduction**

Welcome to the El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro Community S

El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro is a 1,600-mile-long historic r New Mexico that local Indigenous peoples, Spanish colonizers, e route for hundreds of years, transforming the cultural and geogr experience today. The history of El Camino Real de Tierra Adent lives—from the food we eat to the way we build our houses, from goods, and from our ceremonies and festivals to the many thing

This culturally significant route is designated as a National Hist administered by the National Park Service and the Bureau of La process is currently underway to unify the stories being told at t along its length. The planning team is working to create an impr visit to each associated site be more culturally inclusive.

As a valuable member of the community along El Camino Real, i like your feedback on the stories that are told about El Camino f programming at associated sites. Your feedback will tell us whic stories are missing, and which stories we should be telling to cre peoples and cultures who are represented by El Camino Real's s

We thank you for your participation!



**Outreach materials developed by the interpretive planning team. Courtesy images.**



# Creating the Trail's First Interpretive Plan

As a discipline, interpretive planning is unique to parks, trails, wildlife refuges, cultural heritage or historical sites, and other public lands or natural areas set aside for the visiting public. Unlike other plans that focus on finances, management, operations, or facilities, an interpretive plan focuses directly on visitors and how they use and enjoy a site or area. This plan considers the following questions:

- Why would a person want to visit El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail?
- Can visitors find it?
- What's their first impression?
- Where/how can visitors get information about El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro and its key messages?
- What are those key messages?
- Can visitors find their way along the Trail, and from one site to the next?
- What will visitors want to do, feel, learn, and experience during their visit; and what do the Trail administrators and partners hope they will know, feel, and do, etc.?
- How can Trail administrators and partners meet the interpretive goals identified herein in the most cost-effective manner, considering long-term costs, visitor trends, and sustainable values?

The interpretive planning process for the Trail began in December 2019, when Trail administrators, partner agencies, and a contracted consulting team met in Santa Fe, New Mexico, for a two-day scoping session and a tour of several associated sites in northern New Mexico. After more than a yearlong delay due to the COVID-19 pandemic, consultants were able to resume travel and conduct an inventory of existing and potential visitor contact sites along the length of the Trail in summer 2021, followed by outreach at community events and facilitation of virtual stakeholder sessions in fall 2021. Digital stakeholder and community surveys were developed. In-person stakeholder meetings and site tours were held in the El Paso region in late 2021, along with additional stakeholder sessions in early 2022. The planning foundations were submitted to Trail administrators and partners for review and comment in May 2022, with revised planning foundations along with draft recommendations presented in November 2022. After initial feedback from Trail administrators and partners in January 2023, the draft document was made available to the larger community of Trail stakeholders in March 2023, alongside a series of in-person stakeholder input sessions.

At this time, more than 100 individuals representing dozens of partner organizations and numerous communities have provided input to the plan. The results of these discussions with Trail supporters have been invaluable and fundamental to the development of this plan. Looking forward, the support of these and many other stakeholders, partners, and Trail supporters will be critical to the plan's success.

Barring legislative changes, the plan elements in Section 1: Foundation for Planning (contained in this draft) are expected to remain fairly constant through the years, though the Trail's important stories and audience information may need to be revisited and confirmed every decade. Section 2: Recommendations offers guidance to Trail administrators and partners for cost-effective, visitor-relevant, and theme-driven interpretation that adds value to the quality of the visitor experience along El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail and broadens the stories associated with the Trail to be increasingly diverse and inclusive of all those who have been affected by it.

The National Trails System Act of 1968, as amended, calls for establishing trails in both urban and rural settings for people of all ages, interests, skills, and physical abilities. The National Trails System promotes the enjoyment and appreciation of trails while encouraging greater public access. The system includes national scenic trails, national historic trails, and national recreation trails.

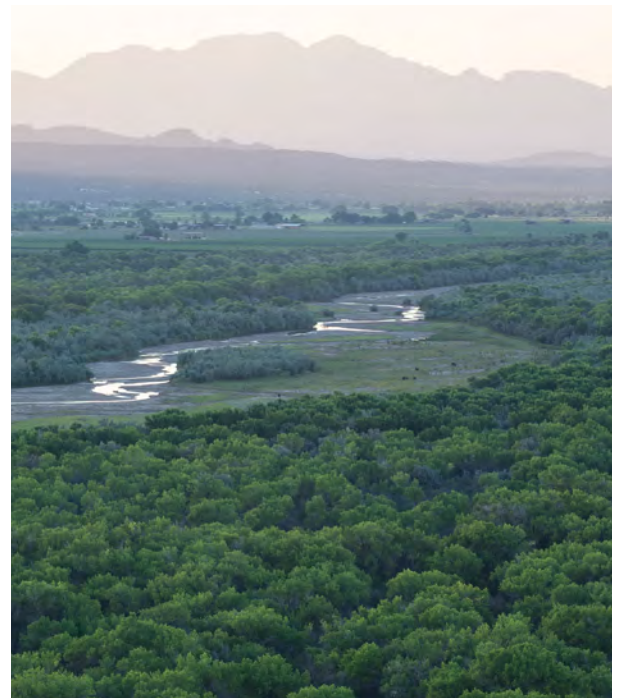
—NPS: National Trails System

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationaltrailssystem/index.htm> (accessed April 2022)

## Legislative and Planning Background

El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail was added to the National Trails System by P.L. 106-307<sup>1</sup> on October 13, 2000, following a 1997 feasibility study prepared by NPS. In 2004, a Comprehensive Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (CMP/EIS) established preservation and public use goals for the Trail.

<sup>1</sup> Pursuant to the National Trails System Act (P.L. 90-543 of October 2, 1968, as amended)



**Rio Grande Valley, located near Fort Craig Historic Site north of Truth or Consequences, NM. BLM photo.**



## Definitions

### Certified Sites

Certified sites are sites that have undergone the National Trails office certification process. Through Partnership Site Certification Agreements, the National Park Service and the respective landowner/manager voluntarily agree to work jointly on planning, interpretation, resource management, and other matters that relate to the historic trail site or segment, and to strive to meet the goals and objectives of the Trail's CMP. Certified partners receive many benefits including technical assistance, project funding and assistance, and recognition. Sites that meet the criteria may offer the NPS passport stamp for the Trail. A list of current certified sites appears in Appendix B.

### High Potential Historic Sites and Segments

High potential historic sites are those related to the route, or are in close proximity to, which provide opportunity to interpret the historic significance of the Trail during the period of its major use and significance. Such sites must be historically significant for the Trail, have visible trail-related remnants present, possess scenic quality, and freedom from intrusion.

High potential route segments are those segments of the Trail which afford high quality recreation experience and greater than average scenic qualities or the ability to vicariously share the experience of the original trail users of the historic route.

### Indigenous

Throughout this document, you'll notice the term "Indigenous" to refer to the group of Native people whose ancestors were in the area that became the United States before European contact. This terminology is in keeping with the NPS editorial style guide developed by the Harper Ferry's Center (<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/hfc/hfc-editorial-style-guide.htm>).

### BIPOC

Another term also used in this document is BIPOC, which stands for "Black, Indigenous, and People of Color." This usage is in keeping with the NPS editorial style guide reference above.

The 2004 CMP/EIS established management strategies; administrative objectives, policies, and processes; and management actions to fulfill the preservation and public use goals for the Trail. All alternatives considered assumed the continued operation of the El Camino Real Heritage Center, located on BLM land and managed by New Mexico Historic Sites (NMHS)—which operated as a focal point for interpretation and education related to the Trail and its resources. However, the Heritage Center closed permanently in 2017. The need for this plan is a result of that closure and the inter-agency coordination that ensued. This overarching interpretive plan is intended to provide comprehensive interpretive guidance to Trail administrators and partners, outlining a unified approach to interpretation for the next 5-10 years.

The Preferred Alternative identified in the 2004 CMP/EIS includes an ambitious program of resource protection and visitor use. This alternative stated that Trail administration and partners will work cooperatively to provide coordinated programming and activities that integrate themes, resources, and landscapes at certified sites on private land or protected sites on public land. Resources that best illustrate the trail's significance would be identified and protected on both public and private land (High Potential Historic Sites and Segments). Certification priorities would be placed upon sites and segments supporting interpretive and educational programming and protecting significant resources. An auto tour route was recommended in the Preferred Alternative, as was bi-national coordination with Mexico to promote activities such as interpretation, events, and signage.



**Mural at Rio Bravo County Park, Albuquerque, NM.** Courtesy image.

# Statements of Significance

Statements of significance capture the essence of the Trail's importance to the natural and cultural heritage of the United States. Please note that the sequence of the statements does not reflect the level of significance.

El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail is significant as a unit of the National Trails System because:

- El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro served as the primary route between the colonial Spanish capital of Mexico City and the Spanish provincial capitals at San Juan de Los Caballeros (1598-1600), San Gabriel (1600-1609), and then Santa Fe (1610-1821).
- El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro transformed North American history, culture, and landscapes as a route of colonization, migration, religious conversion, trade, and military operations for almost three centuries. Today, El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro memorializes the histories and experiences of the diverse cultures who utilized and continue to utilize and be impacted by this historic travel corridor and trade route.
- El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro is a vital international crossroads of social experience recognized throughout the United States as a timeless route of trade and multicultural exchange, spanning economic, social, and political boundaries. The Trail provides context for the development and formation of the Southwest of the United States as it is known today.
- Indigenous people, including the Pueblo people of the Rio Grande Valley, developed trails for trade long before Europeans arrived.
- El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail fosters connections between visitors and the cultural identities, histories, and events associated with the Trail through recreational, interpretive, and educational opportunities. The Trail is a multicultural conduit that serves to uplift the voices and stories of underrepresented groups, broadening visitors' understandings and appreciation of Spanish, other European, Mexican, Black, and Indigenous peoples and cultures.
- El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro fostered the spread of Catholicism, mining, an extensive network of commerce, and ethnic and cultural traditions including music, literature, art, festivals, folklore, medicine, foods, architecture, language, place names, irrigation systems, and Spanish law.

- El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail offers opportunities for visitors to connect with the past and our national heritage, relating to the experiences of the many people who traveled the Trail.

## Heritage Elements Exchanged Along the Trail

The Trail facilitated a great cultural exchange, including, but not limited to the following:

### Intangible

- Languages
- Technological advancements
- Architecture
- Festivals and celebrations
- Religious and spiritual beliefs
- Music
- Literature
- Art
- Ideas about property and society
- Disease

### Tangible

- Foods (cocoa beans, chile peppers)
- Clothing and other textiles
- Tools and weapons
- Household goods
- Buildings and infrastructure
- Horticulture
- Irrigation systems
- Livestock (horses, sheep, cattle, goats, pigs, chickens), domestic pets (cats and dogs), and wild game (buffalo, deer, beaver, elk)
- Minerals (silver, copper, gold, opal, turquoise, salt)
- Religious objects
- Enslaved and/or captive individuals



# Interpretive Themes

Picture El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro as embodying a compelling story, and the process of interpretation as a storytelling art. Because interpretation is purposeful, we set interpretive goals to describe what we want these stories to do—both for the resource and the visitor. Visitor objectives help us translate the larger, more abstract goals into what we want visitors to know, feel, and do as a result of their experience.

Themes are where the art comes in. They are the core messages behind a story's facts. Their job is to highlight the deeper meanings of heritage resources, helping the visitor not only understand their importance, but see themselves as part of their ongoing story. A well-thought-out thematic structure, therefore, forms a unifying foundation for successful interpretation.

A good interpretive theme is expressed in a single, powerful sentence that contains only one idea—an idea that weaves the tangible aspects of the resource (the facts) with their intangible meaning(s). Themes are compelling and memorable. However, a theme isn't necessarily repeated verbatim in any particular story; instead, it forms the framework around which a story is built. Think of an interpretive theme as the “take-away” that you want visitors to remember, absorb, care about, and incorporate—not only into their knowledge base, but their lives. Themes answer the all-important question, “So what?” or “Why would our visitors want to know this—why would they care?”

A landscape as vast and varied as that traversed by El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro holds many stories, creating the opportunity to develop several strong themes. As varied as they are, though, these interpretive themes are organized into a unified message hierarchy that works as a system: one central, overarching interpretive theme capturing the significance of the Trail as a whole, and a series of supporting sub-themes. Sub-themes are just like themes—single, compelling statements of meaning—but their job is to expand on and illustrate the central theme by organizing the area's storylines into meaningful categories.

Every story told on behalf of sites associated with El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro, therefore, can stand alone, yet can (and should) illustrate one or more sub-themes. This is how interpretation works its magic. By framing all stories around a thematic structure, every interpretive experience along the Trail will, in the visitor's mind, connect to a growing and very personal understanding of—and appreciation for—this special route. Over time, each linked experience builds toward a stewardship ethic for the resource, respect for the Trail's significance, and advocacy for historic preservation in general.

The central interpretive theme and sub-themes developed for this plan apply across the entire length of El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail (and perhaps beyond). As site-specific interpretive planning efforts are conducted by

individual partners, location-specific storylines should tier to the sub-themes and support the overall system of messages that follow.

The following themes were developed following a review of existing planning documents and stakeholder input.

## **Central Theme**

For centuries, people, goods, practices, and beliefs were transported up and down El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro—the natural, economic, social, and political conduit between Mexico City and Santa Fe, New Mexico.

## **Sub-themes**

1. El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro forever changed an extensive network of Indigenous trails and communities that have existed in and connected to the Rio Grande Valley for thousands of years.
2. Periods of conflict and peace shaped El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro.
3. Both life-giving and dangerous, the Rio Grande stands throughout time as a vital lifeline for people and ecosystems alike.
4. As a route of Spanish, Mexican, and American colonization, migration, religious conversion, trade, and military operations for nearly three centuries, El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro transformed North American history, culture, and landscapes.
5. People adapted to meet the dangers and challenges of ever-changing natural and sociopolitical conditions along El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro.
6. El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro is a cultural bridge—spanning political boundaries, diverse languages, and environmental obstacles—that connects the past with the present through shared heritage.
7. El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro was part of a larger network of trade routes.



# Essential Questions

In addition to identifying interpretive themes to guide interpretation along the Trail, the National Park Service embraces the process of visitors' meaning making through consideration of thought-provoking questions related to the resources preserved along the Trail.

Effective interpretation often explores controversial and complex issues as a means of finding natural and cultural resources' evolving relevance in today's community. Interpretation honors and incorporates different types of truth—personal, forensic/academic, societal, and reconciliatory—and invites the visitor to consider different perspectives.

Audience-centered programs and media must be dynamic and flexible, with intentional design and clear purpose. A cohesive experience for the audience is achieved by exploring an essential question or relevant idea supported by a purposeful interpretive framework.<sup>2</sup>

The following essential questions are by no means exhaustive in considering the meaning associated with the Trail. However, the questions posed here, as examples, align with the interpretive themes and may be used by all Trail partners to invite dialogue, foster awareness, investigate truths, and encourage collaborative meaning-making related to the Trail.

## Cultural Significance

- Who gets to decide what is culturally significant?
- How does the Trail's complex cultural history impact how we perceive the Trail today?
- What identities are prominent here? What identities are missing or lacking in representation?
- What is the legacy of El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail? Is this legacy the same or different for all of the cultures that use the Trail?

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<sup>2</sup> Foundations of 21st Century Interpretation (NPS Common Learning Portal), Version 2017

## **Understanding the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Trail**

- What does it mean to have a “shared heritage”?
- What does it mean to be “Indigenous” to place?
- How should communities decide what to protect and preserve?
- What responsibility do communities have to preserve and protect the historic and scenic qualities of the Trail? What responsibilities do visitors have to preserve and protect the Trail?
- How do we honor differences in cultural values of the land?
- How are language and cartography used to oppress and/or empower individuals and groups?
- What did Indigenous and Hispanic people call this route? How many different names were there? What were the meanings behind those names?

## **Periods of Peace and Conflict**

- How do past violent acts against individuals, groups, and cultures impact people alive today?
- Can the past violent acts of one culture, group, or society against another be forgiven in the present? Whose responsibility is it to offer and to accept forgiveness?
- What do cultural reparations look like? Who decides?
- Does the process of forgiveness and peace-making ever end?
- Does colonization impact the ways we relate with and think about the land that makes up and surrounds El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail?
- How do individuals, communities, and societies reconcile the past with the present?
- How does the process of colonization continue today?

## Transformation and Social Change

- Who has the right to define justice?
- How does history impact what we think of as justice or oppression? How have these ideas changed over time, especially in our region?
- What does it mean to be an ally to groups resisting oppression?
- Is the violence of colonization on local people taught in local schools? If so, from whose perspective is it taught? Are all perspectives represented?
- How are people transformed through their relationships with others?
- How might it feel to live through a conflict that disrupts your entire way of life?
- How do systems of power and oppression affect the health of communities?
- Are county, state, and national boundaries and borders real or imagined?
- What kinds of separations happen as a result of having borders?
- Is violence ever justified? Who gets to decide this?

## Cultural Exchange

- How are belief systems represented and reproduced through the history, literature, art, music, food, and cultural traditions that were/are shared and created along El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail?
- How do religious beliefs and practices influence the development of social constructs?
- How have our current values of land ownership and use been influenced by the Trail?
- How did the food and supplies we have access to today first become generally available?
- How has the exchange of languages, materials, and manufacturing techniques facilitated by the Trail shaped our communities today?
- How does the exchange of ideas and goods improve lives?
- How does trade influence or instigate cultural exchange?
- What is the larger impact of trade on communities and cultures?
- How does commerce influence innovation and technology?

# Management Goals for Interpretation

Interpretation is purposeful and mission-based; it offers experience-based learning opportunities that increase awareness, build personal connections with a place and its resources, and fosters stewardship. To be most effective, new information should spark insights and connections that are directly relevant to a visitor's life, interests, and values. Interpretation addresses both the intellectual and emotional realms of the visitor.

Management goals for interpretation describe the purpose in offering interpretive and educational products and programs associated with the Trail. As established in the 2004 CMP and expanded on by Trail partners, administrators, and stakeholders, goals for interpretation include:

## Visitor Experience

Visitors will:

- Feel welcome, be aware of safety, and be satisfied with facilities, services, and recreational opportunities.
- Be able to visit historic and archeological sites, museums, and visitor centers offering interpretation and education.
- Understand and develop a deeper appreciation of the Trail's history and significance.
- Make and deepen their own connections with the Trail.
- Where permissible, be able to use the trail corridor in ways that conserve significant values and resources. This includes opportunities to drive sections of the National Historic Trail, and recreation opportunities like walking, biking, and hiking along portions of the Trail and/or Rio Grande Valley.
- Have opportunities to participate in cultural activities associated with the Trail.
- Be able to share and/or obtain scholarly research and interpretive materials to learn more about the Trail's history and significance.
- Be able to participate in both formal and informal educational programs pertaining to the Trail.
- Be able to recognize place names and landscapes associated with the Trail.
- Be able to access all Trail-related facilities and programs, regardless of ability.
- Appreciate and respect the rights of landowners.
- Experience meeting people whose life ways were, and continue to be, influenced by the Trail.
- Gain an appreciation for different perspectives about the Trail's legacy.

## Interpretation and Education

El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro administrators and partners along the Trail will develop a high-quality program of information, interpretation, and education for all visitors. El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro administrators and partners will:

- Provide opportunities for Indigenous people and Genízaro communities (Genízaro communities are descendants of Hispanicized Indigenous captives) to present stories from their point of view in exhibits and documents to add to the body of knowledge and perspectives related to the Trail.
- Collaborate with partners in Mexico to improve binational coordination of interpretation along El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro.
- Promote, develop, and support a variety of interpretive and educational materials appealing to visitors with diverse abilities, interests, and learning styles.
- Work together to ensure that interpretive and educational materials, programs, and media are accurate, consistent, sensitive, and complimentary among the various sites and facilities along the Trail.
- Work cooperatively to provide training for interpreters and educators designed to set and meet high-quality standards.
- Provide trip-planning and other information about the Trail to support visitation to Trail-related sites and interpretive facilities.

## Education

Trail partners, administrators, and stakeholders will:

- Emphasize and support the development of hands-on activities directly tied to Trail-related resources at high potential sites and segments.
- Emphasize and support responsible recreation on public lands and respect for private land ownership.
- Develop educational packages that align with Texas and New Mexico learning standards.
- Improve access to centralized educational resources related to the Trail.
- Encourage opportunities to engage communities along El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro in cultural education and interpretation.
- Encourage the pursuit of grants to write and publish local history and

archaeological investigations through a variety of media.

## Understanding Key Audiences

More than 1.5 million people live in the communities along the US portion of El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro, making local residents among those very likely to take advantage of the Trail's many offerings as frequent visitors, while thousands of unsuspecting travelers (both residents and tourists) traverse this historic route every day, most without realizing it. The sites along the Trail can be expected to draw both US and international travelers to New Mexico and the El Paso area, as culture and heritage opportunities attract the vast majority (76%) of adult leisure travelers in the

### Tourism & Travel Impacts

Tourism and visitor spending have significant economic impacts in New Mexico and in El Paso, TX.

#### New Mexico Tourism Impacts

In 2021, visitors to New Mexico spent \$7.2 billion, creating \$10 billion in total economic impact, including indirect and induced impacts. The financial contributions of these visitors supported a total of 83,811 jobs, which included 63,405 direct and 20,407 indirect and induced jobs. In that same year, tourism in New Mexico produced \$1.4 billion in tax revenues, adding \$708 million to state and local governments (Tourism Economics and New Mexico Tourism Department, 2022).

#### Texas Travel Impacts

According to Texas tourism data from 2020, travel spending by visitor residence shows that residents of Texas accounted for 50% of all traveler spending in the state, with domestic travelers from outside the state contributing 45% and international travelers consisting of 5% of traveler spending. In 2020, total traveler spending in El Paso reached \$1,258.6 M, helping to support 11,860 jobs. Direct earnings totaled \$419.6 M, with state and local tax revenue reaching \$119.7 M (Dean Runyan Associates, 2020).



## Communities Along the Trail

\*This analysis is intended to show how each major city along the US portion of El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro is situated in terms of its unique demographic profile.

For more demographic information on Trail communities, please see the table in Appendix G.

According to 2020 US Census data, the population of Santa Fe, New Mexico, is 87,505. A majority of Santa Fe residents are white<sup>1</sup> (82.2%)—54.7% of those are of Hispanic or Latino descent. Many residents are middle-aged or older, with 23.1% of residents being ≥65 years. At \$57,274, the median household income in Santa Fe is significantly higher than in Socorro and Las Cruces, NM, and El Paso, TX. Median home price (\$290,800) and gross rent (\$1,125 per month) in Santa Fe are also the highest among these Trail communities. Santa Fe's population within city limits is highly educated, with close to half of residents over the age of 25 possessing a Bachelor's degree or higher (42%), surpassing the national average of 32.9%.

A bustling city in north-central New Mexico, Albuquerque has the second-highest total population (564,559 residents) among Trail communities. Albuquerque is racially diverse, with a higher percentage of African Americans (3.1%), Asian Americans (3.0%), and Hispanic or Latino residents (54.7%) residing in the city.

The sparsely populated rural town of Socorro, NM, has a population of 8,707, according to 2020 US Census data. American Indian and Alaska Native residents make up 6.7% of the population—considerably higher than Santa Fe and Las Cruces, NM, and El Paso, TX. Socorro sees the lowest median household income at \$43,337. More than one in four Socorro residents are experiencing poverty (25.7%).

As a large city and urban area, El Paso, TX, has the largest population size in this analysis at 678,815 residents. More than a quarter of El Paso's population is under 18 years of age (26.6%), with persons under 5 estimated at 7.4%. The majority of the El Paso population is Hispanic or Latino, at 81.5%.

Moving south from Albuquerque to El Paso, the percentage of people who speak a language other than English in the home increases, with the most non-English speakers residing in El Paso (67.8%).

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<sup>1</sup> It is important to note that the US Census includes Hispanic individuals in the White category.

United States (Mandala Research, 2013).

## Visitor Needs & Expectations

When planning and designing visitor experiences, it's important to remember that visitors need to know where they are and what's expected of them. As psychologist Abraham Maslow outlined in 1954, people need to have their basic needs met—food, water, safety, and security—before they can attend to personal growth or take in new information. Restrooms, wayfinding, orientation, and etiquette information all play into creating an environment where visitors are relaxed and able to receive new information. Visitors need to feel welcome, comfortable, and clear about how they should interact with any of the park sites. Any facilities that are open to the public must be well maintained, sanitary, and safe.

## Visitor Motivations

Visitor experiences are dependent on visitors' mindsets, motivations, and identity-related needs.

Observing consistencies in the ways that visitor identity is linked to how they decide to visit museums, author and visitor experience researcher John H. Falk categorizes visitors within five types: Experience Seekers, Explorers, Facilitators, Rechargers, and Professionals/Hobbyists. These five types are outlined in the table below:

Falk's Visitor Motivation Types	
Experience Seekers	Motivated by sensory experiences Example: Recreationists and tourists
Explorers	Motivated by curiosity and discovery Example: Children
Facilitators	Motivated by social meaning and a desire to meet the needs of others Example: Parent(s) with children
Rechargers	Motivated by opportunities to rejuvenate outdoors Example: Solo hikers and/or meditators
Professionals/ Hobbyists	Motivated by their interest and knowledge of a subject Example: Birders, naturalists, or nature photographers seeking to capture photos of wildlife.

## Audience Characteristics

The publicly-accessible sites along El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro are numerous and diverse, offering engaging and enjoyable experiences for many types of visitors.

Students and teachers arrive to learn about the natural and cultural significance of El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro, discovering the region's distinct history. Heritage tourists from near and far arrive to trace their genealogy and to learn about their heritage, while history buffs visit Trail sites to satisfy their interests in history. Local families come for an easy day-trip experience, while vacationing families arrive to have fresh experiences of new places—and both return to their favorite museums, art galleries, fairs, festivals, or events. Incidental tourists are those who discover that they are on the Trail after they've already arrived—perhaps by viewing a Trail marker sign or visiting a site associated with the Trail—and choose to continue their experience. Commuters, motor tourists, and pit-stoppers arrive by car or bus, traveling the historic highways and roadways of El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro. Authors, scholars, photographers, and other artists come to immerse themselves in the rich history of the region, using the interplay of nature and culture as inspiration for art making and scholarly activities. Unable to visit the Trail in-person, virtual visitors engage with the sites and stories of El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail through printed literature, social media, online events, videos, podcasts, and more, representing a diverse range of audiences from across the country and the globe.

The most effective interpretive products are those that are created with a specific audience in mind. Although Trail sites will offer interpretation for all visitors, several groups have been identified by stakeholders as important audiences to reach. Interpretation across El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail should consider the interests and needs of the following audiences.

## Target Audiences for Interpretation

### Local Residents

Local residents and their families live on El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail—their daily lives are part of the living story of the Trail. The foods they eat, their communities, and the highways and travel ways they use all originate from this historic travel corridor. However, as a foundational aspect of the lives of local residents, the cultural and historical impact of the Trail might be obscured by day-to-day life. Local residents<sup>3</sup> would benefit from interpretation that illustrates how they, their communities, and the people indigenous to the region actively participate in the on-going story of El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro, allowing them to see sites with fresh perspectives. Interpretation that speaks to local residents' relationships with the Trail would enhance this audience's experience and encourage them to visit Trail sites and attend special events such as fairs, festivals, and family-friendly interpretive programming. Local residents would also benefit from seasonal interpretive exhibits, events, and programs that change over time to keep the stories and themes of El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro fresh in their hearts and minds.

### Heritage Enthusiasts and History Buffs

El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro's rich historical and cultural significance draws visitors from near and far who are interested in the unique history and heritage of the region. Heritage enthusiasts visit cultural centers; historic towns, plazas, and pueblos; historic sites; and museums and chapels, tracing their lineage along the Trail. History buffs are those whose heritage may or may not be directly tied to El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro, but who are interested in topics related to the region's history. These audiences would benefit from interpretation that expresses the Trail's history as a travel corridor and its past and present impact on the region's cultures and sense of place. Interpretation should seek to broaden audiences' understandings of history by including and amplifying the voices and perspectives of Indigenous people. Interpretation should be coordinated strategically among El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro's various historical sites to keep visitors engaged by building on and reinforcing the interpretation provided, to coordinate resource use, and collaborate on event planning.

<sup>3</sup> Trail stakeholders observe that residents of Ciudad Juarez (population 1.5 million in 2020, according to datamexico.org) in neighboring Mexico often do day trips to the Mesilla/Las Cruces area and extended trips to northern New Mexico. These regional residents would also benefit from the same types of interpretation that would benefit local residents.



**San Elizario Presidio Chapel, San Elizario, TX.** Courtesy image.

### Youth and Their Families

Youth may initially visit the Trail as students on field trips, participating in guided educational programming. While students are presented with curriculum-based educational programming rather than interpretive programming per se during school field trips, many Trail sites possess opportunities for children to experience fun and memorable interpretation with their siblings, parents, and families that encourages them to return. For example, while on a field trip to Los Luceros State Historic Site, a student may learn about the importance of the Rio Grande to Indigenous people and early settlers and want to come back with their family to hike along or play in the Rio Grande with them. Interpretation that would best serve this audience is experiential, appropriate for children of all ages, and centers the perspectives of cultural groups that are representative of the region, such as Indigenous tribes and significant cultural figures of the past and present. Families with children visit the Trail for special events, free admission days, family-friendly interpretive programs, hiking or walking trails, and opportunities to utilize Trail sites as locations for family reunions, birthday parties, and other family gatherings.



# Visitor Experience Objectives

What motivates visitors to explore El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail? What are they looking for? What do they expect to find? What memories will they take away with them when they leave?

Interpretive planning seeks to enable a high level of visitor engagement for all visitors, regardless of age, ability, or background, at every contact point along El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail.

At a minimum, all visitors to the Trail should have opportunities to:

- Gain an awareness of the varying historical and contemporary Indigenous homelands they pass through.
- Appreciate the Hispanic, Indigenous, and other cultures present along El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro and how they have related to each other through time.
- Understand how El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro shaped both the history of New Mexico and Texas, and the nation, as well as international relations with Mexico.
- Learn about many diverse individuals—including from historically underrepresented populations—on and along the historic trade route.
- Feel some of the universal emotions that may have been experienced by Indigenous people as colonizers subjugated their communities and claimed their lands.
- Feel some of the universal emotions that may have been associated with leaving home, undertaking a journey, and experiencing new landscapes and cultures.
- Gain an appreciation for the scope and scale of the journey north given the technologies available at the time.
- Broaden their perspectives by building on their knowledge and experiencing additional sites and activities.
- Rethink their own assumptions about cultural identity.
- Explore the stories and physical route of the Trail through a range of diverse and accessible interpretive media choices such as wayside exhibits, interior exhibits, immersive and hands-on activities, films, audio, photographs, audio description and/or braille, and web-based storytelling.
- Get involved with the Trail and associated sites and organizations, whether by donation, volunteering, advocacy, or other kinds of stewardship.
- Leave the Trail experience asking questions, and knowing where to turn in-person or virtually to experience more.
- Share the Trail experience with friends and family.



# Challenges and Opportunities Affecting Interpretation

This section identifies factors that influence the visitor experience. Each factor likely includes some degree of challenge, as well as identification of one or more opportunities that rise out of the challenge.

## Visitor Access

Access to the Trail is inconsistent. About three quarters (77%) of the Trail is less developed, with 55% of the land from Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo (formerly San Juan Pueblo), NM, to El Paso, TX, being privately owned. Trail access is generally available along trail segments that pass through the Trail's five primary urban areas—Santa Fe, Albuquerque, Socorro, and Las Cruces, NM, and El Paso, TX—which total just 14% (58 miles) of the Trail. About 16% of the Trail distance (60 miles) is located in rural development or farm country.<sup>1</sup> Fifteen percent of the Trail is located on Tribal lands.<sup>2</sup>

There is a lack of connectivity along the entire length of the Trail—much of this in rural areas and/or areas with a low level of development. These less developed sites lack visitor services such as restrooms, drinking water, and visitor information. Some signage along the length of the Trail is inconsistent, not maintained, and sometimes illegible or out of date, impacting Trail access and the visitor experience.

Opportunities to improve wayfinding, trail marking, and interpretive signage along the Trail are abundant. Strategic placement (and replacement, where necessary) of trail markers that identify the Trail's location, especially in urban areas, will increase access to and awareness of the Trail, as will improved highway signage that identifies nearby heritage sites. NPS and Trail partners continue work to inventory all existing trail markers and wayfinding signs in support of this effort.

## Virtual Engagement

Logistical, financial, and personal challenges prevent many individuals from visiting El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail in person. There is a need to explore ways to expand virtual programming, thereby increasing access to Trail sites and resources without visiting in person.

## Trail Wayfinding

Current directional or wayfinding road signage is insufficient or inconsistent. NPS and BLM digital information found on websites, interactive maps, and mobile apps is also inconsistent but continues to demonstrate improvement.

<sup>1</sup> NHT Feasibility Study Environmental Assessment, 1997, p. 38

<sup>2</sup> El Camino Real Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail Comprehensive Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement, 2004, p. 49



**Traveling the Trail.** BLM photo.

Appropriate road signage is necessary to help visitors understand their location and how to follow the Trail and find Trail-related sites. This signage should be easy for travelers to read quickly.

A singular webpage with regularly updated maps and wayfinding information for all associated sites would bring all Trail-related information into one centralized location, allowing current and potential visitors to find the information they are looking for with greater ease. This would require coordination among Trail administrators and partners to determine the primary website.

### **Trail Awareness**

There is a need to clarify the significance, purpose, value, and recreational opportunities of the Trail (as a National Historic Trail) for the surrounding communities and the visiting public. Providing this information will help people plan how they use the Trail, understand and share what they know with others, and, perhaps, become stewards of the Trail.

## A Trail With Many Friends

El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail is administered by the National Park Service and the Bureau of Land Management. Trail sites and landscapes are owned and managed by a variety of partners including government agencies, Tribal nations, and non-profit groups. Collaboration and communication would improve significantly from development and implementation of clear roles amongst all parties, as would efforts related to marketing, fundraising, and technical assistance.

A designated primary non-profit Trail partner would liaison with federal, state, and local governments, as well as land owners and site managers to coordinate, develop, operate, and maintain the Trail, including efforts related to signage, education, and interpretation. Such a partner has been designated in the past, however there is no such agreement currently in place.

Offering interpretive training, organizational support, and guidance on capacity building and resources would improve relationships between Trail administrators and partners. Consistent outreach through stakeholder surveys could be used to gauge interest and need for annual meetings and other forms of collaboration or training.

## Public Perception of the Trail

There is a significant shift in public acceptance regarding how the Trail should be discussed, celebrated, and/or memorialized. Many community members and stakeholders assert that the Trail should be less about memorializing colonizers and more about exploring complex identities and histories.



Fort Selden State Historic Site, Radium Springs, NM. Courtesy image.



## **Accessibility**

The Trail consists of sites and markers on privately-owned land and land managed by state and federal agencies. Accessibility to sites along the trail differ from one place to another; privately-owned sites may or may not follow ADA guidelines, while state and federal agencies are required to follow ADA standards. Information about the level of accessibility for all sites and markers should be made available on printed and digital media.

Trail partners and administrators must explore how visitors with visual, hearing, and mobility impairments, as well as neurodivergent visitors, may interact with Trail sites, resources, and interpretive materials.

Producing print materials and interpretive and orientation signage in multiple languages will make the information accessible to as broad an audience as possible.

## **Official Sites**

Certified and uncertified Trail sites with public access should be listed on all NPS and BLM digital media platforms including, but not limited to: the NPS mobile app, NPS and BLM Trail websites, and the interactive map for the Trail. These lists should be continually and consistently updated. The availability of this information is vital for trip planning.

## **Subsets of the Trail**

Some segments of El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail are known by other names, such as the Mission Trail and the Chihuahua Trail, which may obscure the presence of the National Historic Trail. Informational and interpretation materials that feature these subsets should clearly and consistently tie them into the National Historic Trail.



# Existing Conditions





# Existing Conditions

El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail currently spans 404 miles from Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo (formerly San Juan Pueblo), NM, to San Elizario, TX. Along this route, nearly four dozen individual sites are listed in Trail materials as official Trail-related sites, while dozens more currently or have the potential to provide Trail-related interpretation due to their thematic relevance or complementary position as existing visitor destinations.

Associated Trail sites consist of historic sites (such as churches, forts, individual buildings, plazas, and entire historic districts), museums, monuments and markers, visitor centers, landmarks, recreation trails, national wildlife refuges, and parks.

Visitors can tour meticulously preserved or replicated historic structures; walk, ride, or drive the route that travelers have traversed since time immemorial; view the sweeping vistas of the Rio Grande and experience the desolate landscape of the Jornada del Muerto; see preserved and replicated “carros” and “carretas” that were once used to make the journey; and examine authentic documents and artifacts in climate-controlled museum environments.

At one time, a visitor center specifically designed to interpret the significance of the Trail did exist, but poor placement and a host of other factors rendered the facility non-viable, leading to its permanent closure in 2017<sup>1</sup>. Currently, no central, physical location exists to guide visitors in their exploration of El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail.

## Personal Interpretation

Across the length of the Trail, site managers provide numerous approaches to personal interpretation. While the Covid-19 pandemic certainly eliminated or greatly reduced personal programming at Trail sites, partners have been slow to re-introduce in-person events and programs.

While some sites (such as historic house museums) offer docent-led tours, and independent tourism organizations facilitate heritage-focused travel, the vast majority of interpretation found related to the Trail is self-guided.

However, communities and individual sites often host special events that directly speak to the Trail and/or the cultural traditions that have arisen from it, such as the annual El Camino Real Trade Fair held at the Gutiérrez-Hubbell House. Reenactments related to the Trail—such as La Entrada pageant during the Fiesta de

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<sup>1</sup> New Mexico Historic Sites brochures that feature this as a destination are still in circulation as of the writing of this report.

Previous: **Old Town Albuquerque**. Courtesy image.



Santa Fe—historically focused on celebrating the entry or re-entry of Spanish settlers into New Mexico and have been discontinued as social acceptance for this myopic representation of the Trail has waned.

At present, there is no comprehensive listing of Trail events, either trail-wide or by state or region. To find Trail events, or other personal interpretive programming, visitors have to know about specific sites and search those individual websites.

## Interpretive Media

In the field of interpretation, the term ‘interpretive media’ refers to any visitor communication method that depends on media (wayside panels and other graphic signage, interior and exterior exhibits, social media postings, brochures and other publications, websites, mobile applications, audiovisual programs). These resources allow self-guided learning along the Trail. Dedicated partners offer interpretive materials at numerous sites along the Trail. Below is a sample of what is available to visitors.

## Print Publications

- The primary printed publication associated with the Trail is a standard NPS unigrid fold-out brochure and map. This publication is distributed in bulk and free of charge to partners to enable them to better serve their visitors and provide general orientation and information about the Trail. Several NPS-created rack cards are also widely available.
- Most Trail partners also have unique and individual printed materials, ranging from quick, informal hand-outs to high-end glossy publications. Such publications follow graphic identities unique to each site.



Trail materials. Courtesy image.

## Interior Exhibits

Trail partners offer a wide variety of interior exhibits in different settings across the length of the Trail, ranging from small installations to large multi-gallery immersive experiences. Well-funded institutions are able to employ a range of technology and a curated approach to collections, yet are always faced with the challenge of staying relevant and creating engaging experiences, responding to visitor trends and preferences, and keeping up-to-date with technology.

Other institutions struggle to create an optimal visitor experience due to an overabundance of artifacts and information, and have been unable to keep up with changing visitor expectations related to content and presentation.

There is a pressing need to digitize collections and upgrade many interior exhibits along the Trail to respond to visitor needs and expectations and incorporate available technologies.

Interior interpretive exhibits currently found along the Trail can be categorized as follows:

### Secondary

The story of El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro is a secondary part of the story and exhibits related to the Trail are only a portion of the exhibits.



**New Mexico History Museum, Santa Fe, NM.** Courtesy image.



**Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, Albuquerque, NM.** Courtesy image.





## Digital and Web-based Media

### NPS Website

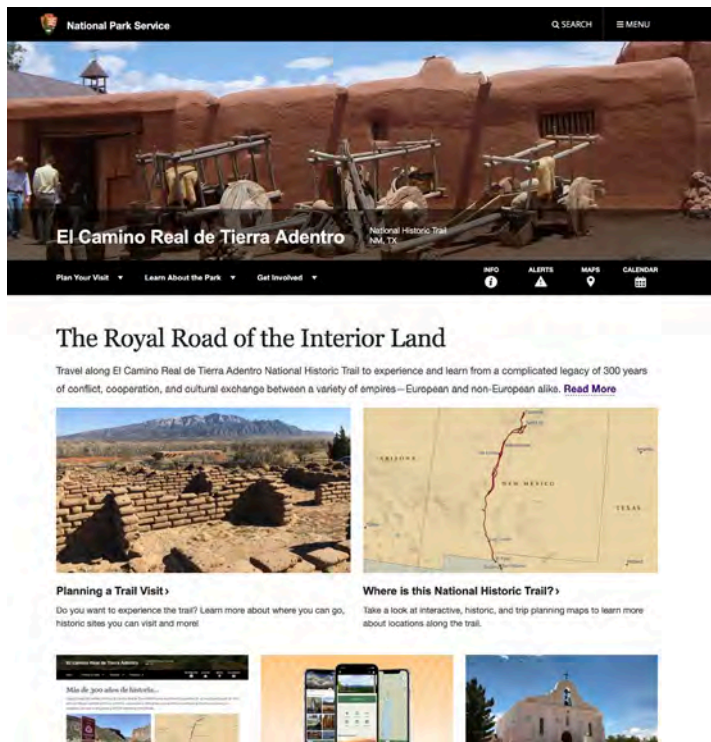
Like all units of the National Park Service, El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail has an NPS website ([www.nps.gov/elca](http://www.nps.gov/elca)). This site includes basic information helpful for planning a trip, learning about the trail, and accessing information about how to get involved. An interactive map allows visitors to explore the route and get more information about specific sites. The entire website for the trail is also available in Spanish.

### NPS App

The service-wide NPS mobile app features orientation, wayfinding, and trip planning information, and includes a map that allows the visitor to zoom in, click on a specific site for information, and access driving directions. A virtual tour of Martineztown in Albuquerque is also included. Trail site elements are in the process of being created for the NPS app, but as of the time of printing, not all Trail sites listed on the website-based interactive map or the NPS brochure are populating the app.

### BLM Website

The BLM website (<https://www.blm.gov/programs/national-conservation-lands/national-scenic-and-historic-trails/el-camino-real-de-tierra-adentro>) provides a brief narrative overview of the Trail, along with links to a downloadable pdf of the NPS brochure and the webpage of the former non-profit partner CARTA. Another link takes the visitor to a BLM-hosted web page (<https://www.blm.gov/visit/el-camino-real-de-tierra-adentro-national-historic-trail>) with additional information and an interactive map, however this map does not include any of the associated Trail sites. A link to the NPS-hosted interactive map for the Trail appears at the bottom of this secondary page.



Screenshot of NPS website. Courtesy image.



## Partner Websites

In addition to the NPS and BLM websites for the Trail, most Trail partners have their own website, one of which offers trailwide coverage—CARTA (<http://www.caminorealcarta.org/>), the former non-profit partner that received NPS funding at one time.

Bernalillo County created a StoryMap for the 2021 El Camino Real Trade Fair—a web-based virtual exploration of the Trail featuring activities, demonstrations, and video presentations.

## Social Media

NPS National Trails Office staff have developed and maintain the following sites:

- Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/ElCaminoRealdeTierraAdentroNPS/>

This page is specific to the Trail.

- Instagram

<https://www.instagram.com/nationaltrailsnps/>

This page includes all of the historic trails administered by the National Trails Office Regions 6/7/8.

- Flickr

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/150851199@N02/>

This page includes all of the historic trails administered by the National Trails Office Regions 6/7/8.

- Twitter

<https://twitter.com/NTIRNPS>

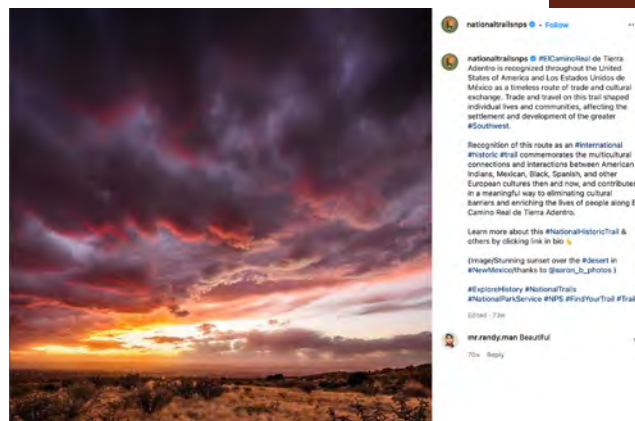
This page includes all of the historic trails administered by the National Trails Office Regions 6/7/8.

- YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/user/NTIRNPS>



**The National Trails Office's Facebook page for the Trail.** Courtesy image.



**The National Trails Office's Instagram page occasionally features information related to the Trail.** Courtesy image.

This page includes all of the historic trails managed by the National Trails Office Regions 6/7/8.

BLM staff also maintain active social media pages on Facebook, Flickr, Twitter, and YouTube—these all feature statewide content, not specific to the Trail.

## Youth and Educational Programming

### Junior Ranger Programs

An online Junior Ranger activity, available in Spanish and English, about the Trail is available from the NPS Trail website; users must print the activity sheet, complete it using images on the website, and mail or e-mail it to the National Trails office to earn their Junior Ranger badge.

### Curriculum-based Educational Programming

A number of educational resources from a variety of partners cover a wide range of concepts related to the Trail, touching on cultural groups, historical events and people, and early life. These curriculum resources have been evaluated against current learning standards for New Mexico and Texas as well as the proposed interpretive theme structure for the Trail.

While all of the educational resources have connections to state histories, many resources do not meet the primary learning standards related to the Trail. A 2003 set of lesson plans specific to the Trail was commissioned by the BLM and New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs, but has not been updated to correlate with current learning standards.

#### El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail Junior Ranger Program



*Spanish travelers used this trail in 1598 to move to the New World (New Mexico). They brought chocolate, chiles, silver, silks, and many other products that we still use today! The trail became a lively route of trade amongst Indians, Spaniards, Mexicans, New Mexicans, and Americans. As you can imagine, they had to get to know each other pretty well.*

To complete the junior ranger program, use the official map and guide trail brochure.

#### ¡Vamos Adelante! (Let's hit the trail!)

Which of today's states and countries were crossed by El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro? Unscramble the letters and label them on the map.

enw xiemoc

ndtieu issate

xtsea

omicex



#### True or False?

Are these statements true? Use the trail brochure to figure them out! Write **true** on the line if the sentence is true. If the sentence is false, write **false** on the line. Have fun!

\_\_\_\_\_ El Camino Real went as far south as Mexico City.

\_\_\_\_\_ In 1598, the caravan of people going north were looking for gold!

\_\_\_\_\_ Historic *parajes* (campsites) became today's modern cities along the Rio Grande.

#### Junior Ranger Program sheet for the Trail. Courtesy image.

## Other Planning Considerations

### Rio Grande Trail

According to the Rio Grande Trail Commission established in 2015, the “Rio Grande Trail is New Mexico’s cross-state, recreational trail for hiking, biking, and horseback riding along the Rio Grande.” While El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro largely follows the Rio Grande, it does deviate from the river in several places. The Rio Grande Trail connects existing sections of recreational trail and paves the way for building of new trail that will eventually connect north with south. A master plan has been completed for the trail and efforts to implement and designate sections of trail continue.

### Bernalillo County’s El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro NHT Development Concept Plan

Finalized in 2022, this plan included an extensive stakeholder outreach process and recommendations for the preservation and development of a recreational retracement trail following portions of El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro NHT through Bernalillo County. In addition to trail improvements for biking and walking, the plan also calls for improvements in marking the roads in proximity to or that follow the historic route. Several locations have been identified as high priority for interpretive improvements, including Sandia Ranch Open Space (a master plan for this site is currently in process), the River Crossing at Avenida Dolores Huerta, Los Poblanos Fields Open Space, and the Albuquerque Rail Yard, as well as new outdoor exhibits or other developments for the five parajes identified as High Potential Historic Sites and Segments located in the County (Los Padillas, Pajarito, Atrisco, Old Town, and Alameda). Trail improvements will integrate public recreation features such as pollinator gardens, community gardens, public art, parks, historic markers, rest areas, and plazas. In the southern part of the County, the Trail passes through the Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge, where improvements are underway to create an interpretive trail focused on El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro NHT. The Development Concept Plan also recommends the development of an interpretive plan specific to the Bernalillo County section that will identify specific themes and media types for each site, informed by this Trail-wide interpretive plan.



**Development Concept for the Bernalillo County section of El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro NHT.** Courtesy image.

### El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Scenic Byway

The Trail is also designated as El Camino Real De Tierra Adentro National Scenic Byway, a program administered by the U.S. Federal Highway Administration.

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# Recommendations

The background of the entire page is a gradient of red and orange. In the center, there are two large, stylized silhouettes. On the left is a Pueblo man wearing a wide-brimmed hat and holding a long staff. On the right is a Spanish soldier in a full uniform, also holding a long staff. The silhouettes are filled with a lighter shade of orange.

## WORLDS COLLIDE

The Spanish soldiers, settlers, and priests who came to our Pueblo homelands brought many unfamiliar objects and animals, such as horses, cattle, sheep, metal tools, and weaponry. They forced their religion, language, and culture upon us. We were forbidden to practice our ceremonies, songs, dances, and prayers. They also brought unseen pathogens, spreading diseases that ravaged our communities. The Spanish took our food and clothing and required us to perform backbreaking labor. If we did not comply, we were severely punished. This Spanish sense of cultural superiority, and their lack of cultural accommodation, eventually led to the Pueblo Revolt of 1680.



# Recommendations

El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail offers visitors a wealth of existing and potential opportunities to explore and enjoy the Trail's many significant touchstones—from cultural, military, and natural history to personalities, historic settings, persistent artifacts of trade, cultural events, and recreational opportunities, among others.

The following recommendations were synthesized from a variety of input sources—stakeholder workshops and webinars, stakeholder and community surveys, interviews with individual stakeholders and partners, and inventory of existing and potential opportunities. During this process, several major categories of suggestions emerged as critically important. While the specifics varied, the majority of partners and stakeholders wanted recommendations related to these areas:

- A. Improve inclusivity in interpreting the Trail to visitors
- B. Improve community outreach and audience development
- C. Help Trail administrators and partners collaborate
- D. Expand and refine interpretive media that serves the Trail and reflects contemporary audience needs and characteristics
- E. Implement learning and development opportunities for partners
- F. Increase interpretive staff and assistance
- G. Develop and promote Trail-wide youth and education programming

To address these focus areas, the planning team has identified a number of strategies to implement over the next 10 years.

Previous: **Exhibit at Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, Albuquerque, NM.** Courtesy image.

## A. Improve Inclusivity in Interpreting the Trail to Visitors

1. Seek ways to increase Tribal engagement with interpretation of the Trail.
  - a. Conduct listening sessions with tribes with homelands affected by and located along the length of the Trail.
  - b. Seek guidance and participation from tribes in the preferred coordination and communication format for partners.
  - c. Invite guidance and participation from tribes in developing cultural awareness and sensitivity training for Trail partners conducting interpretation.
  - d. Invite participation from tribes in review of interpretive products and programs for the Trail.
  - e. Develop and recruit for programs that connect Tribal youth with opportunities and resources to work with land management agencies and/or with Trail partners in land management, interpretation, education, etc.
2. Acknowledge the varying perspectives and realities of the Trail's significance by elevating stories of people who experienced oppression by those who traveled the Trail, such as BIPOC (including Genízaros), as well as women and children. Continue to tell the stories of the lifestyles of the people who settled, in addition to those who were displaced.
3. Encourage interested parties/stakeholders to engage with their local Trail partner organization in the development of interpretive products and programs associated with the Trail.
4. Pursue opportunities to increase the diversity of storytellers (the people who are conducting personal interpretation programming) at sites and institutions across the Trail.
  - a. Develop youth volunteer/internship programs and opportunities in interpretation.
  - b. Consider developing a program of trained Trail Ambassadors in communities across the Trail.
5. Explore how visitors with visual, hearing, and mobility impairments, as well as neurodivergent visitors, may interact with Trail sites, resources, and interpretation.
  - a. Assess what types of accommodations Trail sites currently possess, if any, and consider how to improve and expand these accommodations.<sup>1</sup>
  - b. Create an online resource page listing the kinds of accommodations Trail sites have for multiple types of disabilities (e.g., QR tags to provide audio descriptions, accessible trail standards, etc.) allowing visitors with disabilities to know what they can expect when they arrive at their destinations.<sup>2</sup>

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1 While Federal sites are required to meet various accessibility requirements, Trail partners should also explore how best practices in accessibility accommodations can be applied at their sites.

2 Many larger, established Trail sites typically list these types of accommodations on their websites, but such a webpage might collect this information to facilitate the visitor experience of the Trail.

- c. When creating media and signage at Trail sites, use multiple media formats such as online and/or narrated media to serve visitors with visual disabilities.
  - d. When interpreters or site staff are talking to visitors with disabilities, use person first language (or language that puts the person before the disability) speaking from a person-to-person viewpoint.
6. Replace outdated interpretive products and programs that perpetuate a primary story of colonization.

## **B. Improve Community Outreach and Audience Development**

1. Continue efforts to educate Trail partners and stakeholders in the relevance of the Trail to their particular community and organization, including intangible aspects of the Trail (food, music, literature, dance, celebrations, traditional arts and crafts, technological advancements, etc). Emphasize, where appropriate, how Trail segments that also go by other names (Mission Trail, for example) are part of El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro.
2. Continue efforts to inventory existing roadside signs, Trail markers, and wayfinding signage and install and/or replace where needed. Consistent, regular identification of the Trail is of utmost importance.
3. Pursue opportunities to bring Trail interpretation into community venues and institutions (libraries, senior centers, city parks, community gardens, walking and biking paths) along the designated Trail.
4. Increase visibility and presence through periodic (semi-annual) travel by Trail administrators to key sites along the Trail to meet with stakeholders and have a presence at local events and meetings with local organizations and community leaders.
5. Promote the process and benefits of the Trail site certification program and High Potential Historic Sites and Segments designation protocol.
6. Conduct an audit of online lists of passport stamp locations (NPS app, website, etc) to ensure information is up-to-date.
7. Explore opportunities to partner with the states' tourism offices to feature the Trail in multimedia and advertising campaigns.

## C. Help Trail Administrators and Partners Collaborate

The Trail's success depends on the individual and collective success of the numerous partnering agencies and sites. The following recommendations focus on strategies to increase collaboration among Trail administrators and partners.

1. Develop and implement a new agreement with a primary non-profit Trail partner. This partnership will address coordination of education efforts and resources, development and review of signage (wayfinding, orientation, and interpretive) and other interpretive products, as well as training in interpretive principles and content related to the Trail. Such a partner might consist of an umbrella organization with local chapters.
2. Facilitate communication among administrators and partner sites and institutions through the creation of a regularly scheduled forum (quarterly meeting, newsletter, listserv, or other appropriate method) where accomplishments, ideas, lessons learned, opportunities, problems and solutions can be shared, fostering an improved sense of connection along the Trail.
  - a. Evaluate whether more regular coordination should occur along the length of the Trail or by different regions.
3. Create and maintain a directory of all Trail partner sites with site names, ownership/affiliation, addresses, phone numbers, institutional email addresses, Trail passport stamp availability, and key staff members' contact information.
  - a. The directory should be organized both alphabetically and by region of the Trail. Passport stamp locations should be clearly marked with an asterisk or an icon.
  - b. Make the directory available to all partners and promote it intermittently through the forum described above.
  - c. Update the directory every 3-5 years.
4. Work with the Trail's primary nonprofit partner to create a travel fund that supports partner-to-partner visitation in the interest of increased collaboration, outreach, and training.
5. Create an online, Trail-wide calendar of events that Trail administrators and partners can contribute to and the public can view. Explore whether this calendar would best be hosted on the NPS website or by the primary nonprofit partner.
6. Develop an online inventory of interpretive resources, such as relevant photos and archives, as well as traveling exhibits.

## **D. Expand and Refine Interpretive Media that Serves the Trail and Reflects Contemporary Audience Needs and Characteristics**

Traditional interpretive media, primarily in the form of exterior exhibits and interior museum exhibits, have been a mainstay of Trail interpretation since (and prior to) designation as a National Historic Trail. The continued presence and evolution of digital and social media calls for a new approach to Trail-wide interpretation beyond physical exhibits.

1. Utilize interpretation to explore the multiple identities, varying perspectives, and complex histories related to the Trail's cultural and social significance.
  - a. Feature voices, perspectives, public art, images, and stories reflective of the diverse historic and contemporary communities located along and impacted by the Trail.
  - b. Reflect the diversity of surrounding communities by offering orientation, interpretation, and educational information in the local languages.
  - c. Include Indigenous land acknowledgement statements and opportunities for Indigenous people to share their stories and perspectives related to the Trail whenever possible.
2. Promote digitization of collections at partner sites along the Trail.
3. Highlight personal, relatable stories featuring women, People of Color, and Indigenous communities that promote feelings of inclusivity and greater appreciation for cultural diversity along the Trail.
4. Encourage partner sites to conduct routine visitor feedback collection and analysis regarding Trail visitation and visitor experience, with some requested feedback centering on the Trail-wide experience. Results should be shared in a way that all Trail partners can access.

### Personal Programming

5. Support the development of theme-based interpretive programming that explores topics related to the Trail at partner sites along the Trail.

### Signage

6. Utilize the inventory of interpretive materials developed through this planning process as well as the wayfinding and trail marking inventory developed by Trail administrators and partners in the creation of a comprehensive sign plan for the Trail, or, at minimum, a system of ranking and prioritization for sign development and replacement. Ensure that wayside and other signage development standards are adhered to.
7. Continue to implement cohesive content development and design standards for signage bearing the Trail logo and design scheme.



8. Continue to offer technical assistance and financial support for high priority sign projects.
9. Encourage partners located in regions of the Trail to coordinate and collaborate on high-priority sign projects, looking for opportunities to explore the idea of collaborative sign projects related to other trails, sites, etc.

### Interior Exhibits

10. Assess the conditions and relevance of all interior exhibits hosted by partner sites in relation to the Trail. Promote revisions in focus and language, as necessary.
  - a. New exhibits should be accessible, hands-on, interactive, and invite audience participation whenever possible. Text should be available in multiple languages.
  - b. Exhibits emphasize the lasting implications of the Trail, including trade goods and customs and other cultural artifacts that are relevant in the lives of communities today.
  - c. Look for opportunities to partner in the development and implementation of new exhibits, where Trail administrators and/or partners can fund and/or collaborate on a high-quality exhibit that includes a relevant aspect of the Trail.
11. Create a series of simple, low-cost pop-up traveling exhibits that can be used by Trail administrators and partners at community events, venues, and institutions.
12. Build on existing efforts to create and maintain a series of “Trail trunks” for use in educational programs, temporary displays, and as interpretive props across the length of the trail.

### Digital Media

13. Promote and expand virtual interpretive programming.
  - a. Continue to update and enhance the content available on the NPS mobile app, including the Amenities section, and ensure that site information is consistent with the the Trail’s NPS website and interactive map.
  - b. Promote and expand the availability of digital self-guided site tours (e.g. Martineztown) at sites along the length of the Trail.
  - c. Incorporate a “Quick Facts” section to the primary website.
  - d. Consider creating one or more augmented reality (e.g. Timelooper) or other technologically appropriate tours (e.g. StoryMap) of historic areas with adequate historic photo assets, as well as the entire Trail length.
  - e. Facilitate virtual exploration of the Trail.
    - Incorporate existing partner-provided video and photo assets of the more remote sections of the Trail.

- Create interactive panoramic images of important resources and/or viewpoints as opportunities arise. These images should be annotated with notable features.
- Provide an overview of the experience involved in making the journey along the Trail, including the sights, sounds, and conditions (water sources, where one slept, what travelers may have eaten).

14. Ensure Trail-wide publications, such as brochures and maps, are also available digitally for download.

15. Continue contributing to the NP Gallery photo bank that documents the Trail with images and illustrations.

- a. All imagery should be high quality, high resolution, and available for use without restriction. Photo captions and credits should be apparent.

16. Commission a film (or a series of short films) for Trail-wide use, targeted toward the “digital native” generations. Employ contemporary film-making techniques.

### Social Media

17. Continue to enhance the Trail’s presence on social media accounts.

18. Develop and distribute a social media guide for Trail administrators and partners.

- a. Investigate successful hashtags for the Trail and monitor results of any new hashtag campaigns.

19. Collaborate with other agencies and partners on social media campaigns that cross-promote featured destinations and events along the Trail.

20. Consider implementing periodic or regularly scheduled trivia-style or other audience participation posts that invite visitors to correctly identify a location, cultural practice, or event.

21. Invite visitors to contribute their own photos and videos related to the Trail.

22. Regularly feature content related to responsible recreation and outdoor etiquette.

### Print Publications

23. Continue updating Trail brochures and maps, as needed.

24. Create travel itineraries to help visitors know the experiences available to them across the length of the Trail, including where they can physically step foot on one of the routes segments.

- a. Make these itineraries available at the sites mentioned in the itineraries, as well as online.

### Events

25. Elevate the visibility of the Trail through partnerships with other agencies and community-based organizations at local community events across the Trail.

26. Develop and maintain a Trail-focused lecture series.

### Public Art

27. Showcase public art in the form of murals, sculptures, etc., that expresses the Trail’s primary themes to create opportunities for inclusivity and representation.

- a. Commission public art along the Trail where appropriate from local artists and marginalized Trail communities to incorporate creative, local perspectives, and experiences of the Trail.
- b. Ensure that public art expands beyond and challenges the typical imagery/ icons associate with the Trail and works to expand the narrative and perspectives associated with the Trail, where appropriate. For example, stakeholders described the need for Trail interpretation to “explore complex identities and histories rather than serve as a memorial to colonizers.”

### Guided Tours

28. Support the development of guided tours along the Trail.

- a. Consider a training/certification designation for tour operators.

## **Existing Festivals and Events Related to the Trail**

There are numerous festivals and events held along the Trail that relate to Trail themes and could be used as a mechanism to increase awareness of the Trail. Such events include, but are not limited to:

- El Camino Real Trade Fair—Bernalillo County, New Mexico
- Indian Market—Santa Fe, New Mexico
- Traditional Spanish Market—Santa Fe, New Mexico
- Santa Fe Harvest Festival—Santa Fe, New Mexico
- Santa Fe Wine & Chile Fiesta—Santa Fe, New Mexico
- Southwest Chocolate and Coffee Festival—Albuquerque, New Mexico
- Hatch Chile Festival—Hatch, New Mexico
- Fiber Extravaganza—Las Cruces, New Mexico
- Mission festivals and feast days
- Community-based fiestas and pow wows

## **E. Implement Learning and Development Opportunities for Partners**

1. Continue to provide regular training opportunities in interpretive skills as well as knowledge-based training about the significance of the Trail's resources that will benefit both partners and Trail visitors.
  - a. Encourage adherence to professional interpretive standards and best practices.
  - b. Encourage partners and their volunteers to pursue certification through the National Association for Interpretation or online courses (such as those offered through the Eppley Institute).
  - c. Ensure that training addresses cultural sensitivity and awareness.
  - d. Host regular training sessions, virtually or in-person, at rotating locations along the Trail.
  - e. Incorporate training about BIPOC, and past and present lifeways relevant to the Trail into training. Ideally, any training about Indigenous cultures and Tribal matters will be provided by Tribal members.
  - f. Reward training attendees with an achievement certificate attesting that they are trained interpreters of the Trail.
  - g. Encourage partners who have completed training to share their skills and knowledge with the public-facing staff at their individual site.



## **F. Increase Interpretive Staff and Assistance**

1. Prioritize interpretive and organizational technical assistance for lesser-known sites who have sufficient capacity and interest and assist these sites in increasing their level of development.
2. Create an interpreter's toolkit with a quick reference guide to Trail interpretive themes, goals, and visitor objectives; basic factual information about the Trail; administrator roles and contacts; reference lists; images of Trail features; and the interpretive plan.
3. Develop and distribute a handbook and/or guidelines related to the development of interpretive products and programs for the Trail.
4. Develop a robust, thematically-oriented activity planning form as a tool for interpreters, and train them in its use.
5. Encourage Trail partners to conduct regular evaluation of interpretive products and programs related to the Trail that they offer via a multi-prong approach: participant feedback, self-evaluation processes, and periodic staff observation. Adjust or supplement training and provide feedback as needed.
6. Consider the benefits of providing ongoing support and coaching through a peer mentorship program.
7. Support partners with volunteer recruitment and recognition, as appropriate.

## **G. Develop and Promote Trail-wide Youth and Education Programming**

1. Host periodic listening sessions with educators to learn more about how Trail administrators and partners can help enhance education efforts.
2. Promote sharing of existing educational resources that address the Trail's interpretive themes as well as meet learning standards for Texas and New Mexico.
  - a. Support the development of new educational resources that meet gaps in current availability (that both address the interpretive themes and state learning standards).
  - b. Support the development of a central repository of curriculum resources. Consider utilizing a map with linked resources.
  - c. Educational resources always include a PowerPoint, lesson plan, and activity sheet.
  - d. Market the available resources to school leaders.
3. Host professional development sessions for educators.
4. Consider developing an NPS Teacher-Ranger-Teacher program for the Trail that offers a stipend to an educator in exchange for educational program development (such as curriculum development, outreach, virtual program development, or other capacity-building activities).
5. Continue to support the Trail-wide Junior Ranger program.

# Implementation



This implementation chart is designed to help El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail set priorities and make concrete, measurable progress on the recommendations in this plan over the next seven to ten years. Given the difficulties of predicting funding resources, it is understood that implementing these recommendations will be a gradual process, and that Trail decision makers will need to reevaluate and make adjustments in the plan periodically as circumstances change. This is as it should be: At its best, a long-range interpretive plan is a flexible, living document that inspires, rather than locks in, a Trail's continuing step-by-step progress toward realizing its interpretive goals.

The following chart summarizes the recommendations and places them in three categories:

- **Short-term** recommendations are proposed for action within the next three years.
- **Mid-term** recommendations are proposed for action within the next four to six years.
- **Long-term** recommendations are proposed for action within seven to ten years or more.

Recommendations with checks in all three categories should be viewed as ongoing, continuous activities.

The cost projection column provides a rough estimate of the relative costs of each recommendation. The – symbol denotes activities that can be completed without outside expenditures. The symbol \$ estimates a moderate cost (under \$50,000 per year or per project); the \$\$ indicates expenditures of \$50,000 to \$100,000; and the \$\$\$ indicates major expenditures, usually capital projects such as facilities construction or remodeling, exhibit installations, visitor transportation vehicles, or other costly items or projects.

Previous: **Exhibit at Gutiérrez-Hubble House, Albuquerque, NM.** Courtesy image.



Recommendations	Who's Involved?	Under-way?	Costs	Short-term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-6 years)	Long-term (7+ years)
<b>A. Improve Inclusivity in Interpreting the Trail to Visitors</b>						
1. Increase Tribal engagement with interpretation of the Trail						
a. Conduct listening sessions with tribes	Trail administrators, Tribal input		–	X	X	X
b. Seek guidance and participation from tribes regarding coordination and communication	Trail administrators, Tribal input		–	X	X	X
c. Invite guidance and participation from tribes regarding cultural awareness and sensitivity training surrounding interpretation	Trail administrators, Tribal input		–	X	X	X
d. Invite tribes to review interpretive products and programs	Trail administrators, association <sup>1</sup> & partners, Tribal input		–	X	X	X
e. Develop and recruit for Tribal youth programs	Trail administrators, association & partners, Tribal input		\$	X	X	X
2. Elevate stories of oppression. Continue to tell stories of settlers, in addition to those displaced.	Trail administrators, association & partners, Tribal input		–	X	X	X
3. Encourage stakeholders to engage locally.	Trail administrators, association & partners		–	X	X	X
4. Increase the diversity of storytellers (youth & ambassador programs).	Trail administrators, association & partners		\$	X	X	X
5. Explore how visitors with impairments interact with the Trail.						
a. Assess and improve accessibility accommodations at Trail sites.	Trail association & partners		varies	X	X	X
b. Create an online resource page of accommodations at Trail sites.	Trail administrators & association		–	X	X	X
c. Create media formats for visitors with visual impairments.	Trail administrators, association & partners		\$	X	X	X
d. Use appropriate language.	Trail administrators, association & partners		–	X	X	X
6. Replace outdated products and programs.	Trail administrators, association & partners		\$	X	X	X

<sup>1</sup> A new trail association is needed to enter into agreement with the NPS to serve as the Trail's primary non-profit partner. As of the writing of this report, there is no existing agreement, but we identify the tasks that such an agreement would include.

Recommendations	Who's Involved?	Underway?	Costs	Short-term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-6 years)	Long-term (7+ years)
<b>B. Improve Community Outreach and Audience Development</b>						
1. Continue efforts to educate partners and stakeholders in the relevance of the Trail to their site.	Trail administrators, association & partners	X	–	X	X	X
2. Continue efforts to inventory, install, and replace signage.	Trail administrators, association & partners	X	\$	X	X	X
3. Bring Trail interpretation into community venues.	Trail association & partners		\$	X	X	X
4. Increase visibility and presence of Trail administrators.	Trail administrators		\$	X	X	X
5. Promote the site certification and High Potential programs.	Trail administrators		–	X	X	X
6. Ensure online list of passport stamp locations is up-to-date.	Trail administrators		–	X	X	X
7. Partner with the states' tourism offices to feature the Trail.	Trail administrators, association & partners		–	X	X	X
<b>C. Help Trail Administrators and Partners Collaborate</b>						
1. Secure a new agreement with a primary non-profit Trail partner.	Trail administrators & association		\$\$ <sup>2</sup>	X	X	X
2. Create a regularly scheduled forum for Trail partners and administrators to coordinate and collaborate.	Trail administrators, association & partners		–	X	X	X
3. Create and maintain a Trail partner directory.	Trail association		–	X	X	X
4. Create a travel fund that supports partner-to-partner collaboration.	Trail administrators & association		\$			X
5. Create and maintain an online, Trail-wide calendar of events.	Trail association		–	X	X	X
6. Develop an online inventory of interpretive resources.	Trail association & partners		–	X	X	X
<b>D. Expand and Refine Interpretive Media that Serves the Trail and Reflects Contemporary Audience Needs and Characteristics</b>						
1. Explore the multiple identities, varying perspectives, and complex histories of the Trail.	Trail administrators, association & partners		–	X	X	X
a. Reflect the diverse communities of the Trail.	Trail partners		–	X	X	X
b. Offer interpretation and education materials in local languages.	Trail association & partners	X	–	X	X	X
c. Include Indigenous land acknowledgements and sharing opportunities.	Trail administrators, association & partners, Tribal input		–	X	X	X
2. Promote digitization of collections at partner sites.	Trail association		\$		X	
3. Highlight stories that promote inclusivity and appreciation for cultural diversity.	Trail administrators, association & partners		–	X	X	X

<sup>2</sup> This assumes a base level of funding to the association each year, which would cover repeat, operating tasks called for in this plan.

Recommendations	Who's Involved?	Underway?	Costs	Short-term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-6 years)	Long-term (7+ years)
4. Conduct and share results from visitor feedback.	Trail association & partners		–	X	X	X
5. Develop theme-based interpretive programming.	Trail association & partners		–	X	X	X
6. Create a comprehensive sign plan.	Trail association or contractor		\$\$	X		
7. Continue content development and design standards.	Trail administrators, association & partners	X	–	X	X	X
8. Continue technical assistance and financial support for high priority sign projects.	Trail administrators	X	varies	X	X	X
9. Coordinate and collaborate on high-priority sign projects.	Trail association & partners		–	X	X	X
10. Assess and revise interior exhibits.	Trail partners		\$	X	X	X
11. Create traveling exhibits.	Trail administrators & association		\$	X		
12. Create and maintain Trail trunks.	Trail association & partners		\$	X	X	X
13. Promote and expand virtual interpretive programming.						
a. Continue to update the NPS mobile app and ensure consistency with the NPS website and interactive map.	Trail administrators	X	–	X	X	X
b. Promote and expand availability of digital self-guided tours.	Trail administrators, association & partners		\$	X	X	X
c. Incorporate a "Quick Facts" section to the website.	Trail administrators		–	X		
d. Consider augmented reality or other technologically appropriate tour.	Trail administrators, association & partners		\$		X	
e. Facilitate virtual exploration of the Trail.						
i. Incorporate existing video and photo assets of remote section of the Trail.	Trail administrators & association		–	X	X	X
ii. Create interactive panorama images of important resources and/or viewpoints.	Trail association		\$		X	
iii. Provide an overview of the historic experience of the journey.	Trail administrators & association		–	X		
14. Make publications available for digital download.	Trail administrators	X	–	X		
15. Continue contributing to the NP Gallery photo bank.	Trail administrators	X	–	X	X	X
16. Commission a film or series of short films about the Trail.	Trail administrators & association		\$\$		X	
17. Continue to enhance the Trail's social media accounts.	Trail administrators & association	X	–	X	X	X
18. Develop and distribute a social media guide.	Trail administrators or association		–	X		
19. Cross-promote featured destinations and events along the Trail on social media.	Trail administrators, association & partners		–	X	X	X

## Implementation

Recommendations	Who's Involved?	Under-way?	Costs	Short-term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-6 years)	Long-term (7+ years)
20. Implement trivia-style or other audience participation posts on social media.	Trail association		–	X	X	X
21. Invite visitors to contribute photos and videos through social media.	Trail association		–	X	X	X
22. Feature content related to responsible recreation and outdoor etiquette on social media.	Trail administrators & association		–	X	X	X
23. Continue updating Trail brochures and maps, as needed.	Trail administrators		–	X	X	X
24. Create travel itineraries.	Trail association		–		X	
25. Partner at local community events.	Trail administrators, association & partners		–	X	X	X
26. Develop and maintain a Trail-focused lecture series.	Trail association & partners		\$	X	X	X
27. Showcase public art expressing trail themes.	Trail association & partners		\$	X	X	X
28. Support the development of guided tours along the Trail.	Trail association & partners		–		X	X
<b>E. Implement Learning and Development Opportunities for Partners</b>						
1. Continue regular training opportunities for partners.	Trail association		–	X	X	X
a. Adhere to professional interpretive standards and best practices.	Trail administrators, association & partners	X	–	X	X	X
b. Pursue professional interpretive certification.	Trail association & partners		\$	X	X	X
c. Ensure training addresses cultural sensitivity and awareness.	Trail association		–	X	X	X
d. Rotate training sessions at locations along the Trail.	Trail association		–	X	X	X
e. Training about Indigenous cultures and Tribal matters is presented by Tribal members.	Trail administrators, Tribal input		\$	X	X	X
f. Recognize trained Trail interpreters.	Trail administrators & association		–	X	X	X
g. Promote sharing of new skills and knowledge with site staff.	Trail partners		–	X	X	X



Recommendations	Who's Involved?	Underway?	Costs	Short-term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-6 years)	Long-term (7+ years)
<b>F. Increase Interpretive Staff and Assistance</b>						
1. Prioritize technical and financial assistance for sites and organizations with demonstrated need.	Trail administrators		varies	X	X	X
2. Create an interpreter's toolkit for the Trail.	Trail administrators & association or contractor		– or \$		X	
3. Create product and program development guidelines.	Trail administrators & association or contractor		– or \$		X	
4. Develop an activity planning form for interpreters.	Trail association or contractor		– or \$		X	
5. Conduct regular evaluation of products and programs.	Trail association & partners		–		X	X
6. Consider peer mentorship program.	Trail association & partners		–		X	
7. Support partners with volunteer recruitment and recognition.	Trail association		–		X	X
<b>G. Develop and Promote Trail-wide Youth and Education Programming</b>						
1. Host periodic listening sessions with educators.	Trail association & partners		–		X	
2. Promote sharing of educational resources.	Trail association		–	X	X	X
a. Support development of needed educational resources.	Trail association		– or \$		X	X
b. Create a central repository of curriculum resources.	Trail association		–		X	
c. Ensure educational resources are complete.	Trail association		–		X	X
d. Market educational resources to school leaders.	Trail association & partners		–		X	X
3. Host professional development sessions for educators.	Trail association & partners		– or \$	X	X	X
4. Consider developing a NPS Teacher-Ranger-Teacher for the Trail.	Trail administrators		\$		X	
5. Continue the Trail-wide Junior Ranger program.	Trail administrators	X	–	X	X	X

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# Appendices





# Appendix A—References Consulted

Albuquerque Hispano Chamber of Commerce (n.d.). Visitor's Guide to El Camino Real National Scenic Byway in New Mexico.

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# Appendix B—List of Certified Sites

<https://www.nps.gov/elca/getinvolved/certified-sites.htm>

Numerous sites along the Trail in New Mexico and Texas are certified partners with the National Park Service. They include, from north to south:

## Palace of the Governors

Since 1610, this block-long, one-story adobe building has housed the offices and living quarters of 58 Spanish Colonial Governors, 16 Mexican Governors, four military and three civilian governors during U.S. rule, and 17 Territorial Governors. The building endured the 1680 Pueblo Revolt; the 1692-1693 Spanish reconquest; the 1846 arrival of Brigadier General Kearny; and the 1862 invasion of Texas Confederate Troops.

## Spanish Colonial Arts Museum

Santa Fe became a hub of international trade in the 1800s. The exchange of Spanish, American Indian, Mexican, and U.S. cultures inspired uniquely New Mexican art. With 3,000 objects, the collections at the museum are the most comprehensive compilation of Spanish Colonial art of their kind.

## El Rancho de las Golondrinas

This historic rancho dates from the early 1700s and was an important paraje (stopping point) along the “Royal Road.” El Rancho de las Golondrinas is a living history museum located on 200 acres in a rural farming valley. The museum, dedicated to the heritage and culture of Spanish Colonial New Mexico, opened in 1972.

## Camino Real Site

This archaeological site is located southwest of Santa Fe. Due to its sensitive condition, the location is not shared with the public.

## Kuaua (Coronado Historic Site)

The Rio Grande bosque and the Sandia Mountains lie just beyond Kuaua, a prehistoric Tiwa village that was one of the largest Pueblo settlements in the region at the time of the 1540 expedition of Francisco Vázquez de Coronado. For visitors who wander through the ruins along an interpretive trail, explore the museum and visitor center, or take in the pristine views from a shady portal or picnic tables, the Kuaua experience illuminates Puebloan culture.

## Casa San Ysidro: The Gutiérrez/Minge House

Casa San Ysidro: The Gutiérrez/Minge House is a historic house museum. A satellite of the Albuquerque Museum, it is operated jointly with the Village of Corrales with support from Sandoval County and the State of New Mexico Historic Preservation Division. Affectionately known as “Casa,” the property is home to one of the most comprehensive collections of New Mexican art and furnishings.

### Albuquerque Museum of Art & History

Established in 1967, the Albuquerque Museum offers permanent exhibitions of art and history collections, as well as traveling and community-curated exhibits.

### Estancia de los Jaramillo

This historical private residence is not open to public visitation. There is no current on-site interpretation. According to the website, there is a community garden that is open to the public, but not the buildings. The significance of the buildings is architectural.

### Gutiérrez-Hubbell House

Located along the Trail in Albuquerque, this property is listed on the New Mexico Register of Cultural Properties and the National Register of Historic Places. It was originally the private residence, built in 1868, of James L. (Santiago) Hubbell, a merchant and trader, his wife Julianita Gutiérrez-Hubbell, and their twelve children—all of whom were born in the house.

### El Cerro de Tomé (Tomé Hill)

This hill is a natural landmark that has served El Camino Real travelers for centuries. Various petroglyphs are located on the hill. A 17th century road ran along the western base of the hill. After the river changed course during the early 18th century and the founding of Tomé village, the main road shifted to go along the valley and by the village plaza.

### Tomé Jail

Tomé Jail is a historic jail building, and the only remaining remnant of the former Valencia County Courthouse—a two building adobe structure. There is a bilingual inscription carved into the stone lintel. The building is 15 feet wide by 25 feet deep, with plastered stone walls 4 feet thick.

### San Miguel Mission

This church was built on the remains of the old Nuestra Señora de Socorro mission in Socorro, NM. The old mission was built around 1627, but was destroyed in 1680 during the Pueblo Revolt.

### Fort Craig Historic Site (Bureau of Land Management)

In 1854, the US Army established Fort Craig (on a bluff west of the Rio Grande) to protect El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro (located east of the Rio Grande). In 1862, troops stationed there fought an invading Confederate force in the Battle of Valverde. Troops remained here until 1885, three years after the railroad was built through the area.



### Fort Selden State Historic Site

Fort Selden was established in 1865 in an effort to bring peace to south central New Mexico Territory. Built on the banks of the Rio Grande, this adobe fort housed units of the US Army's infantry and cavalry. Their intent was to protect settlers and travelers in the Mesilla Valley and along El Camino Real. The fort remained active until 1891.

### Antonio Store

This building is now private property. According to the NPS website: The owners or managers of these historic sites and interpretive facilities are certified partners with the National Park Service on El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail.

### Barncastle House, John M. and John D.

This residence is now private property and is not open to the public.

### Branigan Cultural Center

The building is on the National and State Registries of Historic Buildings. Branigan Cultural Center hosts changing cultural exhibits, educational programs, classes, and other special events. A list of exhibits includes Along the Camino Real, Settling the Valley, The City Begins, Soldiers, Ranchers, and Outlaws, The Railroad Era, Water and Hard Times, War, Rockets, and Renewal. Guided tours are offered.

### New Mexico Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum

The Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum has interactive indoor and outdoor exhibits, demonstrations, oral histories, objects, and educational programs. Site is on 47 acres with 24,000 square feet of exhibit space, along with catering space for meetings and events, a mercantile and theater. Interior exhibits include New Mexico Colonial Home, Agricultural Beginnings, Farm Life in New Mexico: Then and Now, plus more. Virtual exhibits: Livestock on the South 20, Grist for the Mill New Mexico, plus two more. School tours, guided, and self-guided tours. The Museum also offers adult group tours, livestock tours, summer camps, and Saturday camps (throughout the school year).

### Mesilla Plaza and Mesilla Historic District

Founded in 1848, the town of La Mesilla was originally located in Mexico and became part of the United States with the Gadsden Purchase of 1854. Many of the adobe buildings built during that era remain today. Perhaps the most significant event to occur on the plaza included the consummation of the Gadsden Purchase by the raising of the United States flag.

### Keystone Heritage Park

This park is El Paso's migratory bird refuge and archaeological site situated in the Chihuahuan Desert. Currently there are walking paths providing a view of the birds in the wetland. The 1-mile trail, "Chihuahuan Desert Experience," is designed to show the visitor the different elevations, flora, and fauna of the Chihuahuan Desert. This trail runs parallel to ELCA. Artifacts include a small, single-room brush hut, along with stone tools. This site has a five-acre portion owned by the City of El Paso and a four-acre portion donated by developer Chris Cummings to The Archaeological Conservancy. This site includes the El Paso Desert Botanical Garden and Chihuahuan Desert Experience.

### City of El Paso Museum of History

The El Paso Museum of History features permanent and changing interior exhibits, and specifically features information about El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro. "Historias: Stories of El Paso" is a virtual exhibit. The Museum has over 10,000 artifacts, documents, images, and personal stories, as well as a Digital Information Gateway (interactive digital wall and community archive). Field trips offered for K-7th grade.

### Ysleta Mission Church

The first church at Ysleta was built in 1682 by Spaniards and Indigenous people who fled from or were forced to leave Isleta (south of present-day Albuquerque, NM) during the Pueblo Revolt. Due to periodic floods of the Rio Grande, the present church was built in 1744, but it was heavily damaged after an 1829 flood and subsequently rebuilt. The last major renovations to the church took place after a 1907 fire partially destroyed the structure.

### La Purísima Socorro Mission

Following the Pueblo Revolt of 1680, Spanish settlers and some Indigenous people fled or were forced to leave and head south traveled to this site and named it after the place in New Mexico where they had previously resided. The first adobe church was built here in 1691. A major flood on the Rio Grande in 1829 (which switched this location from present-day Chihuahua, Mexico to present-day Texas), destroyed the church, and the present structure was built in 1840.

### Casa Ortiz

Built in the 1700s, Casa Ortiz exemplifies the simple structures of locally available materials built on the Spanish Colonial frontier. José Ortiz, the site's namesake, was a trader on the Camino. Today, Casa Ortiz houses a private art gallery.

### Los Portales (Casa Garcia)

Los Portales features a museum with interior exhibits celebrating the area's historical legacies, boasting 400 years of significant history.

### Presidio Chapel of San Elizario (San Elceario Catholic Church)

Constructed between 1877 and 1882, the iconic chapel at San Elizario's former military presidio was the fourth chapel built after the presidio's establishment in 1788. Soldiers from San Elizario (also San Elceario), a decommissioned Spanish fort in Guajoquilla, Mexico (present-day Chihuahua), occupied the new presidio to defend area residents and El Camino Real caravans.

### San Elizario Historic District

Set on a section of El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro locally known as the Mission Trail at the point where the trail moves north from Mexico across the Rio Grande and into the United States, San Elizario remains a well-preserved portrait of more than 300 eventful years of frontier life.

# Appendix C—Educational Analysis

Educational Analysis for El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail  
Prepared by Kathryn M Dominguez, M. Ed. for Conservation By Design  
Revised March 2023

## Overview

Highlighting the historical significance of El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail (Trail), this educational report focuses on strategies which connect themes of the interpretive plan with educational state standards of New Mexico and Texas. In an effort to promote awareness within schools and communities and make recommendations, a sampling of existing educational resources was evaluated against the interpretive themes within the project.

The scope of work entails the following:

Identify target education audiences along the Trail and recommend consistent strategies, products, and services that could be developed to serve these audiences, and focus partner efforts in collaboratively creating, implementing, and promoting school curriculum.

The report contains:

- 1) Social Studies Standards Summary
- 2) Science Standards Summary
- 3) Existing Lesson Plan Evaluation
- 4) Recommendations
- 5) Limitations

## Social Studies Standards Summary

### New Mexico

New Mexico's social studies standards are unique to the state and are very specific with many connections to Indigenous people, the Spanish entrada, and El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro. The Trail is mentioned several times in the standards and will draw teachers to search for specific topics related to the grade being taught. All standards related to the Trail and New Mexico's cultural history have been noted in the associated spreadsheet for each grade level.

Elementary (grades K-4) social studies standards begin the fundamental knowledge for the people who inhabited New Mexico for centuries. Exploring cultural studies of foods, traditions, and celebrations, students learn about who settled in the region and the influences of these groups. Several standards connect to Indigenous people, Spanish and Mexican influences. Fourth grade standards specifically relate to the settlement patterns which correlate to the Trail.

Middle school (grades 5-8) social studies standards expand on the natural, economic, social, and political features that shaped New Mexico. The interactions between Indigenous people and Spanish expeditions are interwoven through benchmarks and performance standards. Specific events and people, including the Pueblo Revolt



and Don Juan de Oñate, could be searchable terms used by teachers. The geography standards cover physical changes that have occurred over time.

High school (grades 9-12) social studies standards enlarge the focus to world history. A few standards relate directly to the relationships between Indigenous people and other cultures, including elements of social justice that can be related to local contexts.

In each grade band, some standards directly relate to the Trail and the impact of the Spanish entrada on Indigenous people. Many of the social studies standards overlap, and social, economic, geographical, and political factors can be related as secondary standards. Geography and human presence are noted in multiple standards.

## **Texas**

Texas social studies standards (K-12) make no explicit reference to El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro nor El Camino Real de Tejas. The learning standards relevant to the themes of the interpretive plan relate to culture, Spanish colonization, and environmental resources.

The early grades (K-2) focus on appreciation for cultures, traditions, and celebrations. In grades 3-5, the standards cover historical events and geography. Sixth and seventh grade standards touch on colonization, influences of significant people, and environmental impacts. High school standards are organized by periods in history with Ethnic Studies—Mexican American Studies being most aligned to the plan's interpretive themes.

## **Science Standards Summary**

### **New Mexico**

The Next Generation Science Standards are grouped into three grade bands: K-5, 6-8, and 9-12. The elementary K-5 level has specific standards for each grade. Middle and high school standards are organized by topics of physical science, life science, and Earth and space science. All grade bands have engineering design standards. Overall, standards in the life sciences and Earth systems are most compatible with the themes of the Trail.

Elementary standards link the dependence of plants and animals (including humans) on the natural environment of the Rio Grande and other ecosystems of New Mexico. Earth system standards explore landforms and the changes that make up the geological forms in New Mexico. Older elementary standards correlate the dependency on water and the necessity to protect the environment and resources.

Middle school standards concentrate on the interdependence of ecosystems and organisms' ability to survive. These standards connect to the varied ecosystems of New Mexico, the effects of humans on ecosystems, and the development of solutions to reduce human impacts on the natural environment and water resources.

High school standards link factors that affect species populations and diversity with development of solutions to address the various impacts of human activity. Computational and mathematical modeling are skills embedded in these standards.

The National Next Generation Science Standards are broad standards that connect various concepts. Due to the generalized concepts, teachers will have to find ways to make connections between local natural resources and the Trail. The Rio Grande, riparian habitats, and ecosystems are topics that closely relate to the historic trade route and New Mexico's natural history.

## **Texas**

Texas science standards resemble many of the Next Generation Science standards where engineering design practices and science processes are a core foundation with content areas including matter, energy, Earth and space, and organisms and environments. Like the New Mexico standards, the Earth, organisms, and environments standards correlate with the interpretive plan themes best (i.e., subtheme #3 relating to the Rio Grande). High school science standards are grouped by areas of study with specific courses such as Aquatic Science and Environmental Systems supports studies of the Rio Grande.

Some grade levels have learning standards more directly linked to the Trail than others. The Trail can be a focal point for learning and instruction by connecting standards with the identified themes. The themes primarily correlate with social studies standards where science concepts can be interwoven with one or more of the themes.

## **Existing Lesson Plan Evaluation**

Evaluated educational resources cover a wide range of concepts between cultural groups, historical events and people, and early life. Curriculum resources were evaluated based on their ability to meet the standards and interpretive themes. While all the lessons have their connections to New Mexico's history, many lessons did not meet the primary standards connected to El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro. A handful of lessons were identified as the most applicable, however, there remain some gaps to truly meet the themes and standards. The highlighted lessons are good examples that can be drawn from or revised to better meet the objectives of the interpretive plan.

The following evaluated lessons have been correlated with themes and learning standards in Exhibit A. Applicable science standards are shown in Exhibit B.

- Casa San Ysidro Teacher Guide
- Seven Generations of Red Power in New Mexico
- Kuaua Pueblo Through Time
- First Encounters with Spanish Explorers
- Riparian Zones
- Agua es Vida
- The Grand Adventure

Casa San Ysidro offers PowerPoint presentations with associated activities. The El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro presentation is a good example of how to present a historical perspective of the route. This method of delivery is accessible to many schools and effective in engaging students with visuals. Additionally, the website for Los Luceros State Historic Site is a good example of a user/teacher-friendly website where teachers can access lesson plans and student worksheets.

## Recommendations

1. Focus educational resources on suggested topics related to themes
2. Science lessons focus on the Rio Grande and New Mexico and Texas ecosystems
3. Central place to access curriculum resources (map with links)
4. Resources all include PowerPoint, lesson plan, and activity sheet
5. Reach out to school leaders to pass on website links and resources

The recommendations set forth are ideal methods to meet the standards and themes for the Trail. Exhibit A of this educational resource investigation aligns both New Mexico and Texas social studies topics related to each theme and correlates standards that best meet the topic and theme. Secondary standards can also be correlated when lessons are developed.

Science curriculum resources could be created based on topics that relate science standards to themes. Interpretive theme #3 has the most relevant connection to science standards and possibly theme #5. Two existing educational resources correlate with many of the science topics. Science topics are listed in Exhibit B with correlating standards. Grade 1 does not have a direct connection between the themes and a science standard, but the kindergarten topic/lesson could be used for first grade.

Disseminating materials is crucial to the success of implementing an educational curriculum. One potential avenue is through a central website that has links to lessons correlated to each location. See the sample image at right for what it could look like.

Each lesson would be a package including a PowerPoint, lesson plan, and activity sheet. The PowerPoint presentation consists of content or information from the interpretive products and programs used at the sites. The lesson plan outlines the steps to engage student learning. An activity sheet (worksheet) that connects to the learning objective for students to complete. Teachers can upload all pieces to use in the classroom.



Once these resources become available, education coordinators will need to reach out to school leaders to distribute website links and resources. Potentially, an outreach person would give presentations to schools to market and demonstrate the available resources.

## **Limitations**

These recommendations have associated limitations. First, realigning educational resources for a new topic requires personnel to design lesson plans. Second, if a website is utilized to house the lessons, it will need maintenance and links could potentially become broken. Third, reaching out to school leaders is an exhausting task and requires many contact hours.

The goal of the educational analysis of the El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro interpretive themes, social studies and science standards, and existing educational resources is to provide insight on how best to implement and promote curriculum in schools. Correlating all these elements ensures alignment and gives directions for the educational element of the Trail's interpretive plan.



## Exhibit A

The following El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro Curriculum Recommendations are based on New Mexico and Texas Social Studies State Standards related to the interpretive plan subthemes. Suggested topic names and potential site connections are included. Existing education resources are also correlated.

**Subtheme 1:** El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro forever changed an extensive network of Indigenous trails and communities that have existed in, and connected to the Rio Grande Valley for thousands of years.

Existing Educational Resources: Seven Generations of Red Power in New Mexico, The Grand Adventure

- **Grade: 7**

**Topic: Indigenous People of New Mexico/Texas**

**NM Standard: 5-8 Benchmark 1-A**

2. describe the characteristics of other Indigenous peoples who had an effect upon New Mexico's development (e.g., Pueblo farmers, Great Plains horse culture, nomadic bands, etc.—noting their development of tools, trading routes, adaptation to environments, social structure, domestication of plants and animals)

**TX Standards:**

6th (13) Culture. The student understands the similarities and differences within and among cultures in various world societies. The student is expected to: (A) identify and describe common traits that define cultures and culture regions; (B) define a multicultural society; (C) analyze the experiences and contributions of diverse groups to multicultural societies; and (D) identify and explain examples of conflict and cooperation between and among cultures.

- **Grade: 9-12**

**Topic: Impacts of Colonization on Indigenous People**

**NM Standard: 9-12 Benchmark 1-C**

2. Analyze and evaluate the actions of competing European nations for colonies around the world and the impact on Indigenous populations

**TX Standard:**

HS (6) Geography. The student understands the impact of geographic factors on major events related to Mexican Americans. The student is expected to: (B) identify physical and human geographic factors related to the settlement of [Indigenous] societies

Subtheme 2: Periods of conflict and peace shaped El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro.

Existing Educational Resource—First Encounters with Spanish Explorers, The Grand Adventure

- **Grade: 5**

**Topic: Pueblo Revolt**

**NM Standard: 5-8 Benchmark 1-B**

4. identify the interactions between Indigenous people and European settlers, including agriculture, cultural exchanges, alliances, and conflicts (e.g., the first Thanksgiving, the Pueblo Revolt, the French and Indian War)

**TX Standard:**

5th 1) History. The student understands the reasons for and the role of key people in the European colonization of North America beginning in 1565, the founding of St. Augustine. The student is expected to: (A) explain when, where, and why groups of people explored, colonized, and settled in the United States, including the search for religious freedom and economic gain.

- **Grade: 9-12**

**Topic: Spanish Conquest and Don Juan de Oñate**

**NM Standard: 9-12 Benchmark 2-E**

6. Analyze how differing points of view and self-interest play a role in conflict over territory and resources (e.g., impact of culture, politics, strategic locations, resources)

**TX Standard:**

8th (2) History. The student understands the causes of exploration and colonization eras. The student is expected to: (A) identify reasons for English, Spanish, and French exploration and colonization of North America

Subtheme 3: Both life-giving and dangerous, the Rio Grande stands throughout time as a vital lifeline for people and ecosystems alike.

Existing Educational Resource: Riparian zones, Agua es Vida

- **Grade: 2**

**Topic: Gifts from Rio Grande**

**NM Standard: K-4 Benchmark II-B**

1. Describe how climate, natural resources, and natural hazards affect activities and settlement patterns.

2. Explain how people depend on the environment and its resources to satisfy their basic needs.

**TX Standard:**

2nd (5) Geography. The student understands how humans use and modify the physical environment. The student is expected to: (B) identify consequences of human modification of the physical environment; and (C) identify ways people can conserve and replenish Earth's resources.

7th (8) Geography. The student understands the location and characteristics of places and regions of Texas. The student is expected to: (B) locate and compare places of importance in Texas in terms of physical and human characteristics such as major cities, waterways, natural and historic landmarks, political and cultural regions, and local points of interest

Subtheme 4: As a route of colonization, migration, religious conversion, trade, and military operations for nearly three centuries, El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro transformed North American history, culture, and landscapes.

Existing Educational Resource: El Camino Real del Tierra Adentro (PowerPoint lesson from Casa San Ysidro), The Grand Adventure

- Grade: 7

Topic: Trails and Trade

NM Standards:

5-8 Benchmark 1-A

3. explain the significance of trails and trade routes within the region (e.g., Old Spanish Trail, El Camino Real, Santa Fe Trail)

5-8 Benchmark 2-B

4. describe geographically-based pathways of inter-regional interaction (e.g., El Camino Real's role in establishing a major trade and communication route in the new world, the significance of waterways).

**TX Standard:**

HS (2) History. The student understands developments related to pre-colonial settlements and Spanish colonization of Mesoamerica and North America. The student is expected to: (B) examine the contributions of significant individuals from the Spanish colonial era, including Moctezuma, Hernán Cortés, La Malinche, Bartolomé de las Casas, and Sor. Juana Inés de la Cruz.

Subtheme 5: People adapted to meet the dangers and challenges of ever-changing natural and sociopolitical conditions along El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro.

Existing Ed Resource: El Camino Real del Tierra Adentro (PowerPoint lesson from Casa San Ysidro)

- Grade: 4

Topic: Patterns and Changes

NM Standard: K-4 Benchmark II-C

1. Explain how geographic factors have influenced people, including settlement patterns and population distribution in New Mexico, past and present.
2. Describe how environments, both natural and man-made, have influenced people and events over time, and describe how places change.

TX Standards:

3rd (1) History. The student understands how individuals, events, and ideas have influenced the history of various communities. The student is expected to: (A) describe how individuals, events, and ideas have changed communities, past and present

5th (6) Geography. The student understands places and regions in the United States. The student is expected to: (A) describe political and economic regions in the United States that result from patterns of human activity

Subtheme 6: El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro is a cultural bridge—spanning political boundaries, diverse languages, and environmental obstacles—that connects the past with the present through shared heritage.

Existing Educational Resources: Casa San Ysidro Teacher Guide, Kuaua Pueblo Through Time, The Grand Adventure

- Grade: K - 4

Topic: People in Our Community (Spanish, Mexican, [Indigenous] Heritage)

NM Standards: K-4 Benchmark I-A

1. Identify the customs, celebrations, and holidays of various cultures in New Mexico. (K)
1. Identify common attributes of people living in New Mexico today. (1)
1. Describe how historical people, groups, and events have influenced the local community. (2)
1. Describe how the lives and contributions of people of New Mexico influenced local communities and regions. (3)
1. Identify important issues, events, and individuals from New Mexico pre-history to the present. (4)



2. Describe the role of contemporary figures and how their contributions and perspectives are creating impact in New Mexico. (4)

**TX Standards:**

K (11) Culture. The student understands the importance of family traditions. The student is expected to: (A) describe and explain the importance of family traditions; and (B) compare traditions among families.

2nd (12) Culture. The student understands ethnic and/or cultural celebrations. The student is expected to: (A) identify the significance of various ethnic and/or cultural celebrations; and (B) compare ethnic and/or cultural celebrations.

3rd (10) Culture. The student understands ethnic and/or cultural celebrations of the local community and other communities. The student is expected to: (A) explain the significance of various ethnic and/or cultural celebrations in the local community and other communities; and (B) compare ethnic and/or cultural celebrations in the local community with other communities.

4th (17) Culture. The student understands the contributions of people of various racial, ethnic, and religious groups to Texas culture. The student is expected to: (A) identify customs, celebrations, and traditions of various cultural, regional, and local groups in Texas such as Cinco de Mayo, Oktoberfest, and Fiesta San Antonio.

- Grade: 7

**Topic: Connecting the Past to the Present**

**NM Standard: 5-8 Benchmark 1-A**

4. describe how important individuals, groups and events impacted the development of New Mexico from 16th century to the present (e.g., Don Juan de Oñate, Don Diego de Vargas, Pueblo Revolt, Popé, 1837 revolt, 1848 rebellion, Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, William Becknell and the Santa Fe Trail, buffalo soldiers, Lincoln County War, Navajo Long Walk, Theodore Roosevelt and the Rough Riders, Robert Goddard, J. Robert Oppenheimer, Smokey Bear, Dennis Chavez, Manuel Lujan, Manhattan Project, Harrison Schmitt, Albuquerque international balloon fiesta)

**TX Standard:**

6th (2) History. The student understands the influences of individuals and groups from various cultures on various historical and contemporary societies. The student is expected to: (A) identify and describe the historical influence of individuals or groups on various contemporary societies; and (B) describe the social, political, economic, and cultural contributions of individuals and groups from various societies, past and present.

- Grade: 9-12

Topic: [Indigenous] and Cultural Influences of New Mexico/Texas

NM Standard: 9-12 Benchmark 1-A

1. Compare and contrast the relationships over time of [Indigenous communities] in New Mexico with other cultures.
5. Explain how New Mexico history represents a framework of knowledge and skills within which to understand the complexity of the human experience, to include: analyze perspectives that have shaped the structures of historical knowledge; describe ways historians study the past; explain connections made between the past and the present and their impact.

TX Standard:

HS (6) Geography. The student understands the impact of geographic factors on major events related to Mexican Americans. The student is expected to: (B) identify physical and human geographic factors related to the settlement of [Indigenous] societies

## Exhibit B

Subtheme 3: Both life-giving and dangerous, the Rio Grande stands throughout time as a vital lifeline for people and ecosystems alike.

Existing Ed Resource—Riparian zones, Agua es Vida

### Science Topics and Standards

#### Grade K—Human, Plant, and Animal Needs

##### NM

- K-LS1-1—Use observations to describe patterns of what plants and animals (including humans) need to survive.
- K-ESS2-2—Construct an argument supported by evidence for how plants and animals (including humans) can change the environment to meet their needs
- K-ESS3-1—Use a model to represent the relationship between the needs of different plants and animals (including humans) and the places they live.
- K-ESS3-3—Communicate solutions that will reduce the impact of humans on the land, water, air, and/or other living things in the local environment.

##### TX

- (11) Earth and space. The student knows that earth materials are important to everyday life. The student is expected to observe and generate examples of practical uses for rocks, soil, and water.
- (12) Organisms and environments. The student knows that plants and animals depend on the environment to meet their basic needs for survival. The student is expected to:
  - (A) observe and identify the dependence of plants on air, sunlight, water, nutrients in the soil, and space to grow; and
  - (B) observe and identify the dependence of animals on air, water, food, space, and shelter.

#### Grade 2—Riparian and Desert Habitats

##### NM

- 2-LS4-1—Make observations of plants and animals to compare the diversity of life in different habitats.
- 2-ESS2-2—Develop a model to represent the shapes and kinds of land and bodies of water in an area.
- 2-ESS2-3—Obtain information to identify where water is found on Earth and that it can be solid or liquid.

## TX

- (10) Earth and space. The student knows that the natural world includes earth materials that can be observed in systems and processes. The student is expected to:
  - (A) investigate and describe how wind and water move soil and rock particles across the Earth's surface
- (12) Organisms and environments. The student knows that living organisms have basic needs that must be met through interactions within their environment. The student is expected to:
  - (A) describe how the physical characteristics of environments, including the amount of rainfall, support plants and animals within an ecosystem
  - (B) create and describe food chains identifying producers and consumers to demonstrate how animals depend on other living things

Grade 3—Changes to the Rio Grande

## NM

- 3-LS4-1—Analyze and interpret data from fossils to provide evidence of the organisms and the environments in which they lived long ago.
- 3-LS4-3—Construct an argument with evidence that in a particular habitat some organisms can survive well, some survive less well, and some cannot survive at all.
- 3-LS4-4—Make a claim about the merit of a solution to a problem caused when the environment changes and the types of plants and animals that live there may change.

## TX

- (11) Earth and space. The student understands how natural resources are important and can be managed. The student is expected to:
  - (A) explore and explain how humans use natural resources such as in construction, in agriculture, in transportation, and to make products
  - (B) explain why the conservation of natural resources is important
  - (C) identify ways to conserve natural resources through reducing, reusing, or recycling
- (12) Organisms and environments. The student describes patterns, cycles, systems, and relationships within environments. The student is expected to:
  - (C) describe how natural changes to the environment such as floods and droughts cause some organisms to thrive and others to perish or move to new locations



Grade 4—Rio Grande Shaping New Mexico

## NM

- 4-ESS1-1—Identify evidence from patterns in rock formations and fossils in rock layers to support an explanation for changes in a landscape over time.
- 4-ESS2-2—Analyze and interpret data from maps to describe patterns of Earth’s features.
- 4-ESS3-2—Generate and compare multiple solutions to reduce the impacts of natural Earth processes on humans. (Rio Grande flooding)

## TX

- (10) Earth and space. The student knows that there are processes on Earth that create patterns of change. The student is expected to:
  - (A) describe and illustrate the continuous movement of water above and on the surface of Earth through the water cycle and explain the role of the Sun as a major source of energy in this process;
  - (B) model and describe slow changes to Earth’s surface caused by weathering, erosion, and deposition from water, wind, and ice;

Grade 5—Water from the Rio Grande

## NM

- 5-LS1-1—Support an argument that plants get the materials they need for growth chiefly from air and water.
- 5-LS2-1—Develop a model to describe the movement of matter among plants, animals, decomposers, and the environment.
- 5-ESS2-2—Describe and graph the amounts of salt water and fresh water in various reservoirs to provide evidence about the distribution of water on Earth.
- 5-ESS3-1—Obtain and combine information about ways individual communities use science ideas to protect the Earth’s resources and environment.

## TX

- (11) Earth and space. The student understands how natural resources are important and can be managed. The student is expected to design and explain solutions such as conservation, recycling, or proper disposal to minimize environmental impact of the use of natural resources.
- (12) Organisms and environments. The student describes patterns, cycles, systems, and relationships within environments. The student is expected to:
  - (C) describe a healthy ecosystem and how human activities can be beneficial or harmful to an ecosystem.

## Grades 6-8— Interdependent Ecosystems

### NM

- MS-LS2-1—Analyze and interpret data to provide evidence for the effects of resource availability on organisms and populations of organisms in an ecosystem.
- MS-LS2-3—Develop a model to describe the cycling of matter and flow of energy among living and nonliving parts of an ecosystem.
- MS-LS2-4—Construct an argument supported by empirical evidence that changes to physical or biological components of an ecosystem affect populations.
- MS-LS2-2—Construct an explanation that predicts patterns of interactions among organisms across multiple ecosystems.
- MS-LS2-5—Evaluate competing design solutions for maintaining biodiversity and ecosystem services.
- MS-ESS3-3—Apply scientific principles to design a method for monitoring and minimizing a human impact on the environment.
- MS-ESS3-4—Construct an argument supported by evidence for how increases in human population and per-capita consumption of natural resources impact Earth’s systems

### TX

- 6th (12) Organisms and environments. The student knows all organisms are classified into domains and kingdoms. Organisms within these taxonomic groups share similar characteristics that allow them to interact with the living and nonliving parts of their ecosystem. The student is expected to:
  - (E) describe biotic and abiotic parts of an ecosystem in which organisms interact
  - (F) diagram the levels of organization within an ecosystem, including organism, population, community, and ecosystem
- 7th (8) Earth and space. The student knows that natural events and human activity can impact Earth systems. The student is expected to:
  - (A) predict and describe how catastrophic events such as floods, hurricanes, or tornadoes impact ecosystems
  - (B) analyze the effects of weathering, erosion, and deposition on the environment in ecoregions of Texas
  - (C) model the effects of human activity on groundwater and surface water in a watershed

- 8th (11) Organisms and environments. The student knows that interdependence occurs among living systems and the environment and that human activities can affect these systems. The student is expected to:
  - (A) investigate how organisms and populations in an ecosystem depend on and may compete for biotic factors such as food and abiotic factors such as quantity of light, water, range of temperatures, or soil composition
  - (B) explore how short- and long-term environmental changes affect organisms and traits in subsequent populations

### Grades 9-12—Saving the Rio Grande

#### NM

- HS-LS2-1—Use mathematical and/or computational representations to support explanations of factors that affect carrying capacity of ecosystems at different scales.
- HS-LS2-2—Use mathematical representations to support and revise explanations based on evidence about factors affecting biodiversity and populations in ecosystems of different scales.
- HS-LS2-6—Evaluate claims, evidence, and reasoning that the complex interactions in ecosystems maintain relatively consistent numbers and types of organisms in stable conditions, but changing conditions may result in a new ecosystem.
- HS-LS4-5—Evaluate the evidence supporting claims that changes in environmental conditions may result in (1) increases in the number of individuals of some species, (2) the emergence of new species over time, and (3) the extinction of other species.
- HS-LS4-6—Create or revise a simulation to test a solution to mitigate adverse impacts of human activity on biodiversity.
- HS-ESS3-1—Construct an explanation based on evidence for how the availability of natural resources, occurrence of natural hazards, and changes in climate have influenced human activity.
- HS-ESS3-3—Create a computational simulation to illustrate the relationships among the management of natural resources, the sustainability of human populations, and biodiversity.
- HS-ESS3-4—Evaluate or refine a technological solution that reduces impacts of human activities on natural systems.
- HS-ESS3-6—Use a computational representation to illustrate the relationships among Earth systems and how those relationships are being modified due to human activity.

## TX

- Aquatic Sciences
  - (7) The student knows about the interdependence and interactions that occur in aquatic environments. The student is expected to:
    - (A) identify how energy flows and matter cycles through both freshwater and marine aquatic systems, including food webs, chains, and pyramids
    - (B) identify biological, chemical, geological, and physical components of an aquatic life zone as they relate to the organisms in it
    - (C) identify variables that affect the solubility of carbon dioxide and oxygen in water
    - (D) evaluate factors affecting aquatic population cycles such as lunar cycles, temperature variations, hours of daylight, and predator-prey relationships
    - (E) identify the interdependence of organisms in an aquatic environment such as in a pond, a river, a lake, an ocean, or an aquifer and the biosphere
  - (10) The student knows the origin and potential uses of fresh water. The student is expected to:
    - (A) identify sources of water in a watershed, including rainfall, groundwater, and surface water
    - (B) identify factors that contribute to how water flows through a watershed
    - (C) analyze water quantity and quality in a local watershed or aquifer
    - (D) describe human uses of fresh water and how human freshwater use competes with that of other organisms
  - (14) The student understands how human activities impact aquatic environments. The student is expected to:
    - (A) analyze the cumulative impact of human population growth on an aquatic ecosystem
    - (F) analyze the purpose and effectiveness of human efforts to restore aquatic ecosystems affected by human activities

- Environmental Systems
  - (6) Science concepts. The student knows the interrelationships among the resources within the local environmental system. The student is expected to:
    - (B) relate how water sources, management, and conservation affect water uses and quality
    - (C) document the use and conservation of both renewable and non-renewable resources as they pertain to sustainability
    - (D) identify how changes in limiting resources such as water, food, and energy affect local ecosystems
    - (E) analyze and evaluate the economic significance and interdependence of resources within the local environmental system
  - (11) Science concepts. The student understands how individual and collective actions impact environmental systems. The student is expected to:
    - (A) evaluate the negative effects of human activities on the environment, including overhunting, overfishing, ecotourism, all-terrain vehicles, and personal watercraft
    - (B) evaluate the positive effects of human activities on the environment, including habitat restoration projects, species preservation efforts, nature conservancy groups, game and wildlife management, and ecotourism



# Appendix D—2021 Stakeholder Meeting Takeaways

## Overview

This is a brief summary of key points discussed in stakeholder meetings on October 27th and 28th, 2021, where a total of 31 participants were guided through the initial stages of the interpretive planning process for the Trail.

Please note that these comments came directly from participants and have been incorporated into the draft and revised plans, as appropriate.

The purpose of these meetings was to discuss planning for the visitor experience along the Trail. Main points:

- Introduce principles of interpretation
- Learn from participants how can we best serve visitors on the Trail
- Guide stakeholders through the overall planning process

Stakeholders are interested in interpreting the stories of the Trail to visitors:

- To celebrate diverse cultures, acknowledging the turmoil that brought people to migrate along the Trail and the different ways people arrived to northern NM/TX.
- To discuss the issue of colonialism—as the Trail was originally a monument to colonialism
- To bring forward the Indigenous perspective and the impact of the Trail on tribes indigenous to the region
- For visitors to learn history locally through the ancestors/descendants of those whose families traveled the Trail

Big concepts missing from the central theme and subtheme identified by participants:

- Cultural dynamics
- The Rio Grande as a fragile and precious resource
- How the mass influx of people via the Trail affected the river and landscapes
- Stories of how Indigenous tribes interacted with the river
- Movement of goods, practices, etc., and the movement of people in both directions (north and south) and the Trail's connection with other trade routes
- Colonization and its social/cultural and ecological impacts
- Translation of El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro into English

Missed opportunities related to interpretation of the trail:

- Foregrounding the voices, experiences, and cultures of BIPOC, especially Indigenous people—including yet beyond a land acknowledgement. Being specific (while culturally sensitive) such as talking about how Indigenous people

interacted/interact with the river and how they perceived the Trail and used it before it was taken over by Spaniards. Speaking to what it means to be Indigenous to this place. [Indigenous] is a more political and cultural identity, and less about borders.

- Build on historical relevance of the Trail regarding African American history
- Interpreting the everyday experience of life on the Trail while making sure that the Trail is interpreted as a living history, and the story continues for future generations.
- Tell stories connected to landmarks that visitors drive past on I-25 to avoid giving away exact locations of sensitive sites to prevent looting. Also engaging people who live along I-25, connecting them to the communities along the Trail as well as engaging farmers and ranchers who have access to protect the resource.
- Increasing digital interpretation, such as building an app that communicates to the drivers, is valuable and connects the Trail to state tourism planning

Ways that participants' sites or organizations have shifted how they talk about the Trail in light of diversity, equity, and inclusion:

- Through interpreting Indigenous and non-Indigenous foodways introduced on the Trail, including Pueblo agriculture and foodways
- Talking about who uses the Trail in the present tense—those whose ancestors used/traveled the Trail still live there
- Becoming more aware about how prevalent slavery of Indigenous peoples was during colonization (Genízaros) and learning more deeply about how the Trail became a route used for trafficking
- Looking at the intersections of positionality and identity—such as how the Trail represents many identities—rather than as a way to memorialize colonization. Asking, how did you and your communities get here today?

How the NPS and BLM can better support sites' and stakeholders' interpretive efforts and ways to improve support and coordination for interpretation:

- Grants and discussion forums combining scholarly research with Indigenous voices
- Helping business owners and community members to interpret stories consistently along the Trail through hosting monthly workshops or annual events. Also helping sites to share Trail stories on a larger scale while also highlighting unique areas along the Trail.
- Need for NPS and BLM staff to travel the trail and interface with partners
- Bring CARTA back as an entity
- Provide additional opportunities for the stakeholders to gather, collaborate, and work together
- Funding for signage

- Create a storehouse of information detailing which sites have what resources, artifacts, images, papers, maps, oral histories, etc.
- Encourage short videos that are collected on a centralized web page, with links, that convey historically accurate information and images and that are supported by funding.
- Provide guidance on organizational support: Helping stakeholders and sites to build organizational resilience, increasing capacity to capture resources. More feedback on how to form multidisciplinary teams, what the blind spots are of organizations interested in feedback, providing insight into how sites can develop tourism and enhance transportation and signage.
- Clarify the roles of administration to provide ease in communication among Trail partners
- Consider creating a mailing list or some sort of contact directory

Missing sites:

- Some sites are on private land—such as ranches (a fee is required to access and lead tours—there needs to be an easier method for multiple organizations to access this area)
- More historic research and information is needed with the small communities on the portion of the Camino that is between El Paso and Las Cruces, NM. Highway 28 primarily
- Remarkable well-preserved portions of trail along roads
- There are portions of the Trail where NPS designated the Trail by approximate locations. In places along the river, such routes may have moved.

# Appendix E—Stakeholder Survey Analysis

The El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail Stakeholder Survey was created to gather feedback from stakeholders regarding aspects that are central to the interpretive planning process, such as preferred ways of improving partnerships, the desired visitor experience, how the National Park Service and the Bureau of Land Management can improve interpretive partnerships across the length of the Trail and so on. There were 14 respondents to this survey.

## Q1: Aligning Missions

The Trail reaches into the missions of each respondent’s organization—whether as the main focal point of their organization’s mission, through cultural or community relevance, as a piece of a larger story, or something more. The Trail relates most as the main focal point and has community/cultural relevance, with each category resulting in 35.71% of respondents. For about 14% of respondents, the Trail represents a piece of the larger story that their site tells. For another 14%, the Trail aligns with another part of their mission. For one respondent, the Trail has community/cultural relevance, is part of the deep history their site tells, and has potential educational relevance. For another, their work within an educational institution has involved research of the Trail.

### The Numbers

- Main focal point: 35.71% (5 respondents)
- Community/cultural relevance: 35.71% (5 respondents)
- A piece of the larger story that their site tells... (14.29% (2 respondents)
- Other (please specify): 14.29% (2 respondents)

## Q2: Visitor Experience

Part of the work of interpretive planning is to understand what stakeholders want visitors to know, feel, and do as a result of their experience at a site. According to survey results, most stakeholders want visitors to know how the history of the Trail relates to the history of New Mexico and Texas and to appreciate multiple cultures along the Trail. Over 60 percent of survey respondents expressed that they want visitors to feel connected to the natural landscapes and historic sites, to realize the cultural resilience and significance of the peoples who live/lived along the Trail, to return to or explore other sites along the Trail, and to attend events hosted by sites and organizations related to the Trail. Less than 60% of stakeholders would like visitors to donate to, volunteer with, or learn more about their organization or to feel a sense of awe or wonder. Two survey respondents wrote in their answers. One would like visitors to: “To challenge their own assumptions about identity. To acknowledge the complexity of identities in the past and present. To acknowledge and celebrate

the interconnectedness of North America’s (especially US and Mexico) past and present.” Another stakeholder would like visitors to feel connected to the people who lived/traveled along the Trail in the past and in the present.

#### The Numbers

- To know how the history of the Trail relates to the history of New Mexico and Texas: 78.57% (11 respondents)
- To appreciate the multiple cultures present along the Trail: 71.43% (10 respondents)
- To feel connected to the natural landscapes and historic sites: 64.29% (9 respondents)
- To realize the cultural resilience and significance of the peoples who live/lived along the Trail: 64.29% (9 respondents)
- For visitors to return to or explore other sites along the Trail: 64.29% (9 respondents)
- For visitors to attend events hosted by sites and organizations related to the Trail: 64.29% (9 respondents)
- For visitors to donate to, volunteer with, or learn more about your organization: 57.14% (8 respondents)
- To feel a sense of awe or wonder: 42.86% (6 respondents)
- Other (please specify): 14.29% (2 respondents)

### **Q3: Future Plans for Interpretation Along the Trail**

According to the survey, most of the respondents would like to offer more and up-to-date interpretation at their sites and organizations. Writing in their responses, a few stakeholders briefly described their organization’s current position on future interpretive efforts: one is currently developing an interpretive exhibit about the Trail and another plans to publish research their organization has done on the Trail and is willing to collaborate on interpretive projects. About 20% of respondents are not sure about their future plans for interpretation, while slightly less than 15% are still in the planning process.

#### The Numbers

- Would like more/up-to-date interpretation: 42.86% (6 respondents)
- I don’t know: 21.43% (3 respondents)
- Other (please specify): 21.43% (3 respondents)
- Still in the planning process: 14.29% (2 respondents)



## Q4: Interests in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

As we learn more about the injustices that marginalized and underrepresented groups have faced and continue to face in the forms of white supremacy, colonialism, and systems of oppression, we learn to see our part in both the perpetuation of harm as well as movements towards equity, inclusion, and the honoring of diversity. In this survey, stakeholders were asked if their site has shifted the ways they tell stories about the Trail in the interest of diversity, equity, and cultural inclusion. A majority of stakeholders (64.29%) responded that their sites have not yet changed their narratives. Respondents whose organizations have shifted their stories (35.71%) are doing so in the following ways.

- Using exhibit text to get visitors to grapple with their assumptions about identity; “to explore complex identities and histories rather than serve as a memorial to colonizers.”
- Seeing an increase in requests and support for more research involving descendant and other stakeholder communities as partners and collaborators rather than as research subjects or passive audiences.
- Celebrating new artists that strive to expand on the cultural construction of art and events—bringing new energy to the region while respecting the histories of the past.
- Reviving a living history museum that immerses visitors in opportunities to learn about agricultural practices of 18th and 19th century New Spain and Mexico.
- Social media

## Q5: Improving Partnerships

With so many associated sites and representative stakeholders, partnership between the Trail’s administering bodies (the NPS and BLM) and Trail stakeholders is critical. When asked how the National Park Service and the Bureau of Land Management can better support stakeholders’ sites and/or organizations in interpretive efforts for the Trail, a majority of respondents (85.71%) reported that they would like training for interpreters and educators. Almost 65% of respondents answered that they would like semi-regular meetings with other stakeholders. Over 50% of respondents would like the administering bodies to provide a cohesive interpretive plan for their organizations to follow or work off of. Four survey participants responded with specific requests of the NPS and BLM:

- Provide a forum for co-creating with the Trail’s communities
- Improve coordination with state agencies
- Provide technical assistance on nominating sites into the National Register of Historic Places and/or the National Historic Landmark program
- Help staff the Ysleta Visitor Center

### The Numbers

- Offering training to interpreters and educators: 85.71% (12 respondents)
- Semi-regular meetings with other stakeholders: 64.29% (9 respondents)
- Providing a cohesive interpretive plan to follow or work off of: 57.41% (8 respondents)
- Other (please specify): 28.57% (4 respondents)

## **Q6: Missed Interpretive Opportunities**

Survey participants were knowledgeable about missing interpretive aspects for the Trail. The top three responses illustrated stakeholders' desire for telling the culturally diverse stories of the Trail while challenging outdated colonial narratives. These were: telling the stories and perspectives of Indigenous people and People of Color as they relate to the Trail; connecting with Mexico's interpretation efforts to create an international identity for the Trail; and challenging history as it's been told, giving attention to stories and communities that have historically been marginalized. Offering digital interpretation was chosen by over 70% of survey participants seeking to engage virtual visitors. About 57% of respondents chose Indigenous land acknowledgements, interactive components with interpretive media, and advertising recreation opportunities along the Trail as potential opportunities to explore. Half of respondents saw opportunities for increased accessibility at Trail sites and in related media as needed. Other responses that speak to missed opportunities include:

- Promotion campaign of a single digital/social media page with links to sites along the route
- Providing more information for visitors at Chamizal National Memorial. Collaborating with communities along the trail corridor to create interpretive programs and media.
- Opportunities to engage with immigrant communities through narratives of migration, and also with farming/ranching communities by highlighting the role of the Trail in the exchange of plants and animals (and related farming/eating practices).

### The Numbers

- Telling the stories and perspectives of Indigenous people and People of Color as they relate to the Trail: 78.57% (11 respondents)
- Connecting with Mexico's interpretation efforts to create an international identity for the Trail: 78.57% (11 respondents)
- Challenging history as it's been told, giving attention to stories and communities that have historically been marginalized: 71.43% (10 respondents)
- Offering digital interpretation that engages virtual visitors: 71.43% (10 respondents)
- Indigenous land acknowledgements: 57.14% (8 respondents)

- Interactive components with interpretive media: 57.14% (8 respondents)
- Advertisement of recreation opportunities along the Trail: 57.14% (8 respondents)
- Opportunities for increased accessibility at Trail sites and in related media: 50% (7 respondents)
- Other (please specify): 21.43% (3 respondents)

## Q7: Additional Trail Sites

The history and geographical impact of the Trail in the Southwest is immense. In this yes or no question, almost 60 percent of stakeholders identified sites in their communities that should be associated with the Trail. Some participants shared more broad suggestions of additional Trail sites, such as private ranches, agricultural areas, and potentially dozens of other sites. One stakeholder shared that there is currently an effort to engage the communities in the El Paso, TX area to help determine additional sites in that region. More location-specific stakeholder identified sites are:

- New Mexico State University
- The whole Mission Trail in El Paso, TX
- San Elizario Cemetery
- The naturally-forming salt deposits east of the Guadalupe Mountains and Lake Lucero within present-day White Sands National Park

## Q8: Fostering Effective Partnerships

Working with multiple organizations, agencies, partners, and stakeholders requires careful envisioning and consideration of how to best move interpretation forward. According to the survey results, almost all of the respondents chose that respecting the diversity of each stakeholder and group and appreciating the unique contributions each brings to interpretation along the Trail are of the utmost importance. Almost 80% of respondents answered that sharing stories about the Trail to be considered for interpretation and collaborating on site-specific events when appropriate were effective partnership criteria. More than half of survey respondents agreed that having shared values, goals, and a mission to align all stakeholders and finding unity in the Trail's culturally diverse stories can help to foster unified partnerships. About 14% of survey participants offered their unique responses:

- Providing space for historically marginalized communities to tell their histories if they are interested in doing so
- Eventually returning to hosting conferences

### The Numbers

- Respecting the diversity of each stakeholder and group and appreciating the unique contributions each brings to interpretation along the Trail: 92.86% (13 respondents)
- Sharing stories about the Trail to be considered for interpretation: 78.57% (11 respondents)

- Collaborating on site-specific events when appropriate: 78.57% (11 respondents)
- Having shared values, goals, and mission to align all stakeholders: 64.29% (9 respondents)
- Finding unity in the Trail's culturally diverse stories: 57.14% (8 respondents)
- Other (please specify): 14.29% (2 respondents)

## Q9: Increasing Connection to the Trail's Interpretive Efforts

In this survey, Trail stakeholders expressed interest in engaging in processes that improve or enhance interpretation at their sites and in their organizations. More than three quarters of survey respondents would like to provide feedback or input on proposed visitor experience plans, with about 71% of respondents desiring participation in interpretive training. Approximately 65% of participants would like semi-regular meetings via a shared virtual platform with other stakeholder groups to discuss interpretation as well as opportunities to share knowledge and expertise on the Trail to be used towards interpretation efforts. Half of survey respondents would like a coordinated review process for interpretation along the Trail, and slightly more than 40% would like to share knowledge and expertise on the Trail to be used towards interpretation efforts. Almost 15% of survey respondents answered with their own needs:

- To listen to historians and community members that may want to share
- To obtain funding for public artistic interpretation and educational outreach

### The Numbers

- Providing feedback or input on proposed visitor experience plans: 78.57% (11 respondents)
- Participating in interpretation trainings: 71.43% (10 respondents)
- Semi-regular meetings via a shared virtual platform with other stakeholder groups to discuss interpretation: 64.29% (9 respondents)
- Sharing knowledge and expertise on the Trail to be used towards interpretation efforts: 64.29% (9 respondents)
- Coordinated review process for interpretation along the Trail: 50% (7 respondents)
- Sharing knowledge and expertise on the Trail to be used towards interpretation efforts: 42.86% (6 respondents)
- Other (please specify): 14.29% (2 respondents)

## Q10: Project Updates

Of the 14 survey respondents, 13 provided their name and email to be updated with news regarding the project.

# Appendix F—Community Survey Analysis

The El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro NHT Community Survey was created to gather feedback and input from community members who live along the Trail. Community members offered their feedback on the stories being told along the Trail—which stories are most important, which are missing, and which stories we should be telling to create a more welcoming space for all cultures represented by the Trail. A total of 90 respondents participated in this survey (as of Spring 2023).

## Q1: Demographic Data

Respondents were given the option to submit their zip code, informing the planning team of respondents' locations along the Trail for the purpose of understanding more about the needs and interests of these survey participants.

### Top 5 respondent zip code locations

Albuquerque, NM: 51.69%

Rio Rancho, NM: 8.99%

Santa Fe, NM: 6.74%

Las Cruces, NM: 5.62%

El Paso, TX: 5.62%

### Areas with 1-3 responses

Out of region: 3.37%

Tijeras, NM 3.37%

Roswell, NM: 2.25%

Tucson, AZ: 2.25%

Bosque Farms, NM: 1.12%

Chama, NM: 1.12%

El Prado, NM: 1.12%

Laguna Pueblo, NM: 1.12%

Mesilla, NM: 1.12%

Manuelito, NM: 1.12%

Placitas, NM: 1.12%

Tres Piedras, NM: 1.12%



## Q2: Gauging Awareness of the Trail

To begin, survey participants were asked how much they feel they know about the Trail. Of those who answered, slightly more than half know a little about the Trail. About 40% do not know anything about the history of the Trail. Less than 10% of respondents rated themselves as an expert.

### The Numbers

- I'm an expert: 8.05%
- I know a little: 51.72%
- I don't know anything about the history of the Trail: 40.23%

## Q3: Locations of Prior Knowledge

In this multiple-choice question, survey respondents selected where they had heard about the Trail prior to taking this survey. Most had not learned about the Trail through any of the possible answer choices. However, almost 35% of survey participants reported that they had learned about the Trail through visiting historic sites. Between 26-30% of respondents discovered the Trail through museums or galleries or educational curriculum. Less than 20% of responses include websites, word of mouth, signage, and community groups and organizations. Exposure to the Trail through social media was chosen by only about 3% of respondents. Over 20% of respondents wrote in their unique answers, learning about the Trail through:

- Tribal oral tradition
- 1999 environmental assessment produced by the Dept of Justice
- Conducted and participated in archaeological surveys for NMSU; being involved with research projects on the Trail
- Being a life-long Socorro resident
- Working at a Trail historic site
- Read and studied the area's history
- Travel
- Brochures
- Through organizations such as D.A.R. (Daughters of the American Revolution)
- Events at New Mexico Historic sites

### The Numbers

- None: 35.23%
- Visiting historic sites: 34.09%
- Museums of galleries: 29.55%
- School or educational curriculum: 26.14%
- Other (please specify): 22.37%

- Websites: 15.91%
- Word of mouth: 15.91%
- Signage: 13.64%
- Community groups and organizations: 10.23%
- Social media: 3.41%

## Q4: Information Sources

In this survey, responses from community members indicate that they would use multiple sources to find information about the Trail. A vast majority (about 80%) of respondents would refer to the National Park Service or other websites. Roughly 30% of respondents reported that they would choose to talk to community groups/organizations or an NPS ranger or employee to obtain information. About one quarter of respondents chose social media and travel magazines as information sources, while less than 20% of respondents chose newsletter or newspaper articles or travel and/or tourism agencies. About 9% of respondents reported alternative information sources:

- Media such as books, records, and podcasts
- Oral traditions
- Indigenous organizations
- Libraries
- The internet, and websites such as Google, Wikipedia, and NM True website
- AAA
- Academic articles

Only about 1% of respondents preferred not to answer.

### The Numbers

- National Park Service (NPS) or other websites: 80.68%
- Community groups and organizations: 30.68%
- Talking to an NPS ranger or employee: 29.55%
- Travel magazines: 26.14%
- Social media: 25%
- Newsletter or newspaper article: 17.05%
- Travel and/or tourism agencies: 10.23%
- Other (please specify): 9.09%
- Prefer not to answer: 1.14%

## Q5: Personal Connections to the Trail

Despite living along the Trail, most community survey respondents reported that they do not have a personal connection with the Trail. About 19% of participants reported having a connection to the Trail, expressed in the following ways:

- Ancestors traveled on the Trail; consider the Trail to be part of their personal/cultural history
- Previously worked on archaeological surveys of the Trail
- Currently live very close to/on the Trail

Approximately 18% of respondents are not sure of their personal connections with the Trail.

### The Numbers

- No: 62.50%
- I'm not sure: 18.18%
- Yes: 19.32%

## Q6: Important Concepts

Recognizing the historical importance of this historic trade route and travel corridor, most community members who participated in the survey feel that the history of the state or country is the most essential concept. This was echoed in specific responses provided by about 9% of survey participants, who stated that the most important thing about the Trail to them include the following comments:

- the route is an ancestor that informed cultural agreements and influenced the ways residents live and interact today
- Hispanic history, Chinese history

About half of respondents feel that Indigenous history is critical to interpretation of the Trail, as well as the cultural traditions, ceremonies, festivals, etc. that arose from cultural exchange along the Trail. Almost one quarter of respondents feel that connection to family history/lineage is important to them, with about 12% reporting religious reasons as motivating concepts.

### The Numbers

- History of state/country: 68.97%
- Indigenous history: 50.57%
- Cultural traditions, ceremonies, festivals, etc.: 48.28%
- Connection to family history/lineage: 24.14%
- Religious reasons: 11.49%
- Other (please specify): 9.20%

## Q7: Curious About the Trail

Out of 90 total respondents, 83 selected questions they have about the Trail. Survey respondents want to know what the Trail is, what attractions or activities exist along its route, the uses of the Trail, where it is located, and more.

From ascending to descending order, the most-asked questions related to the Trail are:

- What attractions, sites, or events exist along the Trail? (60.24%)
- What stories are already being told along the Trail? (51.81%)
- What is the Trail? (46.99%)
- Where can I visit the Trail? (45.78%)
- What was the Trail used for? (36.14%)
- Why does the Trail matter? (34.94%)
- Where is the Trail? (30.12%)
- Does the Trail still exist? (26.51%)
- None (7.213%)
- Other (please specify) 3.61%
- Prefer not to say (1.20%)

Survey participants who chose to write in their own questions offered a critical thinking lens regarding the Trail’s far-reaching historical and cultural impacts as well as the function of historical preservation:

- “Are we celebrating the Trail? Are we acknowledging that this transportation route was a vehicle for cultural imperialism and violence against Indigenous people? Did Indigenous people have another name for the route?”
- “How many pre-contact components of the trail are there? From a historic preservation perspective: Does the National Historic Trail designation function similarly to listing in the NRHP? If so, are there established contexts to identify which segments are contributing or non-contributing?”

## Q8: Missing Stories

Survey respondents identified stories that may be missing from current interpretation of the Trail—much of which relate to stories of culture, nationality, and identity, particularly to New Mexican, Spanish, and Indigenous identities and cultures. Of the 82 collected responses, most were concerned with the potential absence or lack of stories and perspectives from Black/African Americans, Indigenous people, and People of Color along the Trail. About 46% of respondents chose New Mexican stories as missing stories, while 37% would like more information on Mexican and Spanish influence and heritage. About 18% of survey participants shared additional missing stories, such as:

- Esoteric cultural knowledge related to the Trail's use
- Stories about migration and displacement and how the trail facilitated movement of people, both voluntary and involuntary
- Information the pre-contact origins of the trail
- The Pueblo Revolt, with more emphasis added regarding the profound effects this event had on the Trail as a powerful act of Indigenous resistance
- Stories that compare the Trail to other major roads/routes

Of these specific responses, 10 were not aware of missing stories, and one requested more information about hiking trails along the Trail. Texan stories were identified as absent from interpretation along the Trail by about 11% of respondents.

### The Numbers

- Stories and perspectives from Black/African Americans, Indigenous people, and People of Color: 52.44%
- New Mexican stories: 46.34%
- Information on Mexican and Spanish influence and heritage: 37.80%
- Other (please specify): 18.29%
- Texan stories: 10.98%
- Nothing is missing: 7.32%
- Prefer not to answer: 6.10%

## **Q9: Cultural & Community Representation**

The Trail represents a culturally diverse region and should equitably represent all of the cultures and communities involved in its stories and histories, past and present. Of the 74 recorded responses, about 38% of survey participants reported that their cultures and communities are not adequately represented by Trail stories currently being told, while about 34% reported sufficient representation.

Of the 35 written answers, two responses specify the ways their cultures and communities are underrepresented, stating that Indigenous cultures and traditions are not represented or emphasized in interpretation. Another respondent shared that it appears to them that the language used to articulate the history appears designed to spare the feelings of those who prefer to celebrate Spanish history. In that sense, interpretation does not tell the story of the losses endured by marginalized peoples.

In contrast, those who identify as Caucasian or Spanish feel that they are represented adequately. Other responses to this question indicate varying degrees of uncertainty or lack of personal relevance:

- Not sure: 10 responses
- Not from this area: 6 responses
- Need more info: about 5 responses
- N/A: 5 responses



## Q10: Theme Relevance and Hierarchy

67 survey respondents ranked the suggested interpretive themes for the Trail from most to least importance. The survey results show that community survey participants ranked the themes in the following order, beginning with the most important theme and including the theme's score out of 10.

El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro is a cultural bridge... Score: 4.02

Both life-giving and dangerous, the Rio Grande stands throughout time... Score: 3.81

As a route of conquest, settlement, religious conversion, trade... Score: 3.65

Indigenous trails, communities, and pueblos provided the blueprint... Score: 3.51

People adapted to meet the dangers and challenges... Score: 3.40

Periods of conflict and peace shaped El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro. Score: 2.81

## Q11: Additional Comments and Concerns

Some community members shared their thoughts and concerns regarding interpretation of the Trail. Those with relevance to this project are:

- Comment: curious about the amount of community feedback the planning team has received regarding this project as they know very little about what is planned for interpretive signage and exhibits without having heard about any public informational sessions.
- Feedback: unless visitors are purposefully looking for information about the Trail, they won't find much.
- Comment: hopes that the team leading this project considers a wide range of methods for interpretation of this site, and suggests creating a map/trail app to guide visitors as they drive along the trail, linking them to interpretive spots as well as sharing stories and information about the trail
- Question: Is it possible to hike from one end to the other like Appalachian Trail?
- Comment: would like to see even more interpretation and more sights
- Feedback: suggests promotion across the Trail supported by local businesses, etc.

## Q12: Request for Project Updates

Exactly half of survey respondents would like to be updated about the project and entered their names and email addresses into the appropriate contact information collection area on the survey.

# Appendix G—Demographics Along the Trail

Demographics of Trail Communities							
US CENSUS CATEGORIES							
POPULATION							
	Population, Census, 2020	87,505	564,559	8,707	111,385	678,815	331,893,745
	Population, Census, 2010	67,947	545,852	9,051	97,618	649,121	308,745,538
AGE & SEX							
	Persons under 5 years old, percent	4.3%	5.7%	4.9%	5.9%	7.4%	6.0%
	Persons under 18 years old, percent	18.1%	21.9%	19.5%	23.0%	26.6%	22.3%
	Persons 65 years and older, percent	23.7%	15.7%	18.2%	16.1%	12.9%	16.5%
RACE AND HISPANIC ORIGIN							
	White alone, percent	82.2%	70.3%	75.6%	78.7%	69.6%	76.3%
	Black or African American alone, percent	1.4%	3.1%	1.4%	2.8%	3.4%	13.4%
	American Indian and Alaska Native alone, percent	1.6%	4.5%	6.2%	1.1%	0.5%	1.3%
	Asian alone	1.5%	3.0%	4.1%	1.7%	1.4%	5.9%
	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, percent	0.3%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%
	Two or More races, percent	7.3%	9.2%	8.3%	8.1%	12.3%	2.8%
	Hispanic or Latino, percent	54.7%	49.2%	48.1%	60.2%	81.5%	18.5%
	White alone, not Hispanic or Latino, percent	39.9%	38.3%	37.2%	33.3%	12.6%	60.1%
POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS							
	Veterans, 2016-2020	4,201	38,135	467	7,974	41,084	17,835,456
	Foreign born persons, percent, 2016-2020	14.2%	9.8%	8.1%	11.5%	23%	13.5%
HOUSING							
	Owner-occupied housing unit rate, 2016-2020	63.2%	60.3%	65.1%	55.3%	59.6%	64.4%
	Median value of owner-occupied housing units, 2016-2020	\$290,800	\$204,100	\$135,700	\$161,100	\$132,800	\$229,800

<b>Demographics of Trail Communities</b>						
<b>US CENSUS CATEGORIES</b>						
Median gross rent, 2016-2020	\$1,125	\$889	\$688	\$805	\$857	\$1,096
<b>FAMILIES AND LIVING ARRANGEMENTS</b>						
Households, 2016-2020	36,096	229,701	2,859	41,467	230,905	122,354,219
Persons per household, 2016-2019	2.30	2.42	2.78	2.45	2.92	2.60
Language other than English spoken at home, percent of persons age 5 years+, 2016-2020	36.2%	27.1%	29.4%	37.4%	67.8%	21.5%
<b>EDUCATION</b>						
High school graduate or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2016-2020	89.9%	90.9%	87.1%	88.5%	80.6%	88.5%
Bachelor's degree or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2016-2020	42.0%	36.5%	29.9%	36.8%	25.9%	32.9%
<b>HEALTH</b>						
With a disability, under age 65 years, percent, 2016-2020	9.8%	10.0%	12.4%	11.2%	9.2%	8.7%
Persons without health insurance, under age 65 years, percent	15.7%	8.8%	5.2%	8.1%	22.0%	10.2%
<b>INCOME &amp; POVERTY</b>						
Median household income (in 2020 dollars), 2016-2020	\$57,274	\$53,936	\$43,337	\$45,140	\$48,866	\$64,994
Persons in poverty, percent	14.3%	16%	25.7%	23.6%	18.8%	11.4%
<b>GEOGRAPHY</b>						
Population per square mile, 2010	1,477.8	2,907.6	628.9	1,276.2	2,543.2	87.4

# Appendix H—The State of Trail Interpretation in Mexico

## Executive Summary of InterpatMx’s Report “Interpretive Media: Existing Conditions, Portfolio of Options and Heritage Tourism Partnerships” for El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro

### Introduction

In support of Conservation By Design’s contract with the National Park Service, associates of InterpatMx were tasked with developing an analysis and portfolio of interpretive media options and heritage tourism partnerships relevant to the stretch of El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro in Mexico (Camino) that connect to current or future interpretive opportunities in Mexico. This document summarizes the report created by InterpatMx for inclusion in the interpretive plan for the National Historic Trail. The full version of the InterpatMx report is available through the National Trails Office, Intermountain Region, based in Santa Fe, NM.

### Purpose and Objectives

This report documents previous and current interpretive communications, facilities, products, and programs along the Camino to determine how new media and programs, as well as new heritage tourism partnerships, can enhance the visitor experience. The report communicates the results of an in-depth research process undertaken by the Mexican heritage interpretation organization InterpatMx. The portfolio section is a product of the review of interpretive objectives for the Camino obtained through information on the Internet, available publications, and direct communication with key stakeholders or entities (federal, state, municipal, etc.) that have carried out various interpretive activities at Camino sites.

Objectives of the research process included:

- Assess existing conditions,
- Gather relevant information from former Camino collaborators on previously implemented interpretive products and programs, and
- Determine what specific media and programs were established and how many are still active.

### General Context for the Project and Research Methodologies

#### Coordination

In Mexico, a large portion of cultural heritage sites are protected by a 1972 Federal Law—enforced by the federal National Institute of Anthropology (INAH) and

managed by several players, depending on the designation of the site. Some historical monuments are administered by federal offices, by state and local authorities, or are stewarded by civil organizations. To date, there have been no inter-state collaborations for the creation of panels, official guides, a Camino web site, or other interpretive products. Some sites have worked in collaboration to produce interpretive projects, facilities, and services.

While INAH oversees all archaeological sites and some regional museums and historical monuments, the remaining cultural heritage sites on the Camino and in the main cities along it are within the jurisdiction of a variety of state, municipal and local/community entities. Coordination of efforts was and continues to be a challenge.

### Continuity

There have been three changes in administration in Mexico since the Camino in Mexico was designated a World Heritage Site by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2010. This continuing shift in governmental priorities has contributed to a lack of continuity in Camino administration. INAH's budget has been significantly reduced during the current government administration, adding to the challenge of initiating and maintaining Camino interpretation. For example, some projects were initiated and then discontinued, while others, like interpretive panels, were completed but not maintained and need to be replaced.

### Management Plan

In 2012, INAH created a Management Plan that was primarily concerned with inventorying important buildings and documenting Camino segments for the purpose of meeting UNESCO's criteria to become a designated World Heritage Site. Twelve years after receiving the World Heritage Site designation, and ten years after the creation of the Management Plan, little has been accomplished regarding interpretation and strategic communication of the Camino's stories. This explains the lack of interpretive materials identified on the field trips conducted by InterpatMx.

The large number of documented Camino heritage sites (60) in Mexico, multiple site types, numerous site managers and governing bodies, and changes in administration makes the coordination of Camino interpretation in Mexico complex.

### **Research Methodologies**

The purpose of this report was to gather relevant archival information about previous interpretive efforts along the Camino to learn more about and verify existing interpretive media and programs.

To do this, the planning team met with INAH representatives (virtually and in person) and traveled different sections of the route to gauge conditions and community awareness. In the first part of 2019, some initial fieldwork was conducted, however, the onset of the Covid-19 Pandemic in early 2020 impacted the ability of the planning team to follow their original methodology.



## Adapting to Change: The Covid-19 Pandemic

Adapting to the changes brought on by the Pandemic, InterpatMx shifted their research methods. During the first year of the Pandemic, InterpatMx hosted Zoom meetings with key Camino stakeholders and gathered relevant information online. They conducted fieldwork at selected locations identified during the investigation to observe current conditions and interpretive quality. In 2022, they made two final field trips to Durango and Chihuahua.

The interruption caused by the Covid-19 Pandemic may have changed or even ended many of the projects that were recorded in the first stage of the development of this report. However, the key findings within this report and the proposed recommendations can still be considered accurate.

## Key Findings

Several ideas were formed based on fieldwork research and interviews with key stakeholders, institutional representatives, and governmental and local leaders.

First, this historic route has been the object of consistent, high-quality work—its historical relevance has interested researchers for nearly 20 years. The Camino's inclusion as a World Heritage site made it a point of attraction for tourism at state and local levels.

However, despite there being a wealth of high-quality information about the Camino, residents and tourists in Mexico are mostly unaware of the Camino's existence, value, and significance.

Next, heritage interpretation is a relatively new field in Mexico. This explains why there has not been clear and consistent progress regarding interpretive communication strategies, products, programs, and facilities. In most of the places where communication about the Camino's heritage value was attempted, it was done without the guidance of an overall interpretive strategy.

In addition to reaching tourists, interpretation must reach the local populations to strengthen their sense of place, explore possibilities to use the Camino's resources to promote social cohesion, and increase heritage resource protection.

Lastly, among the experts interviewed, there was great interest in interpretive projects for the Camino and a desire to integrate efforts from different states and levels of organization (from federal to local).

As a result of the interviews, fieldwork, and research conducted, nine key findings emerged:

1. Interpretation has not played a significant role in Camino initiatives in Mexico thus far. Instead, initial efforts focused on identifying and recording heritage sites for UNESCO World Heritage Site designation.
2. The Camino's enormous scale and the multiple and diverse levels of stakeholders and key-players makes coordinating interpretation along the Camino complex. While there is a management plan for the entire Mexican portion of the Camino, it has not been implemented. INAH's current solution is to create, with the

participation of regional and local authorities, a “managing unit,” or a general council that will act as a decision-making body for the Camino in coordination with the ten Mexican states involved.

3. Both INAH and other local institutions have prioritized researching the Camino and growing an extensive bibliography, which explains why interpretive materials have not been developed and why implementation of the management plan has been stalled.
4. There is little public awareness locally and nationally of the historical and cultural importance of the Camino—and even of its existence. Without recognizing or understanding of the Camino’s value and importance, segments of the route are in danger of disappearing due to development and urban expansion. Sections of the Camino near urban centers have an improved chance of protection, having firmer regulations and better facilities than rural sites. Cities with a strong INAH presence like Zacatecas and Querétaro have devoted areas of their regional museums to the Camino and explain its importance, whereas smaller towns like Lagos de Moreno are less resourced.
5. With the correct approach, the Camino has immense potential for regional and local development that can increase tourism—bringing visitors in and helping to improve local conditions.
6. In addition to the economic benefits of tourism development, interpretation of the Camino has the potential to strengthen the recognition of local identities, traditions, and a common past among residents. Reconnecting Camino visitors with their common roots and telling their stories would help to create better social conditions, beyond borders.
7. There are businesses, like hotels, restaurants and one winery, that use the Camino as part of their branding. This holds potential for investment opportunities in these contexts, as these businesses could be interested in communication of the Camino from an interpretive perspective.
8. The INAH officials interviewed by the InterpatMx team are open to an international collaboration of Camino interpretation. The prospect of using common graphic elements to create a Camino identity on both sides of the border, and maybe even sharing some content elements and stories, was well received.
9. A large-scale communication program took place in 2012 and heritage-value proposals written for the public were developed for each of the 60 sites listed in UNESCO’s World Heritage designation. Going forward, these kinds of documents should be revisited.

It must be noted that some states have more Heritage Sites designated than others. During the initial push for World Heritage designation, some elected officials were particularly active in the nomination efforts, putting money and resources into projects that were designed to enhance public awareness of the Camino. However, once the designation was secured, many of these communication and outreach efforts ceased. In states that have large amounts of cultural tourism, such as Zacatecas and Guanojuato, tourism offices and state governments do not currently promote the

Camino or otherwise invest tourism resources into developing it as a tourism asset. Where there currently is tourism and outreach activity related to the Camino, most of it is from an academic perspective. Most of the existing public-facing communication products, such as panels and brochures, were created in the context of the World Heritage designation.

## **General Perspectives and Approaches to Interpretation**

### The Role of INAH

As the key promoter of the Camino as a World Heritage Site, INAH collaborates with UNESCO to host events and projects related to research and meetings for experts. At INAH's regional (state-level) offices, some panels, flyers, and museums have been created in collaboration with state institution and local organizations, such as the museums in Zacatecas and Durango.

INAH is open to work on a binational project for Camino interpretation. They are interested in creating a unified logo and a brand identity among the Mexican states and are open to the possibility of working on one shared logo with the U.S.

### The States' Approach

As stated previously, coordination of interpretation among each state the Camino passes through has been inconsistent. These inconsistencies increase with the complexity of management under multiple governing bodies. Despite these issues, the InterpatMx planning team was able to collect data on the status of the Camino's interpretation in each state. What follows is a brief overview of these findings:

#### **Chihuahua**

- Has a very large number of features related to the Camino, yet only one World Heritage site.
- Research has been the primary motivation for recognizing the Camino's heritage value.
- In a community-based project supported by INAH, 16 municipalities, their communities, and project partners are registering heritage elements to promote municipal declarations along the Camino.
- These municipalities and partners are interested in establishing interpretive facilities as this is almost totally absent in state tourism services.

#### **Durango**

- This state office has an outstanding amount of research about the Camino.
- Specialists here started systematic register of Camino resources in Durango in 2004
- Has given more emphasis to promote its assets as a World Heritage resource and was very active in the nomination process. Informal interpretive panels were created, and public conferences and other activities were hosted. Due to support from Durango's governor at the time, some projects for tourism promotion and communication succeeded.

- Today, most of the panels are weathered, damaged, and have not been maintained.
- As part of the activities developed in the context of its nomination, an interpretive facility with three exhibit halls was established in ex-hacienda Navacoyán. Its exterior panels are now in poor condition and almost unreadable.
- Has more panels than any other state visited but are still few due to many being unreadable.
- INAH is working with other social sectors to devise a way to organize the Camino's stakeholders in Durango to coordinate the management of sites and to facilitate interpretive services.

### **Zacatecas**

- Was very involved in the World Heritage nomination process.
- Projects related to research and community involvement were developed by INAH and the Regional Institute of World Heritage in Zacatecas.
- Already has a lot of cultural tourism, so tourism offices and state governments don't consider promoting and investing in the Camino's interpretation as a priority.
- No information about the Camino in tourism offices.
- World Heritage sites generally do not have panels or interpretive services and when they do, the information is not related to the Camino.
- INAH dedicated a hall to the Camino within its regional museum in Museo de Guadalupe in Zacatecas.
- Most sites lacked interpretive or communication services about the significance, value, and history of the Camino.
- A local winery borrowed the Camino's Mexican logo and branding, but the site does not communicate the Camino's history or significance with visitors.
- Locals are not aware that they live on or near the Camino.

### **San Luis Potosí**

- Is deeply involved with Camino-related research and heritage conservation.
- Has participated in specialists' meetings for more than 10 years.
- No interpretive or communication activity about the Camino.
- In terms of tourism, the focus is not related to the Camino as a cultural itinerary.
- Has alliances in Zacatecas to promote heritage conservation.
- Has community-based action related to the Camino and awareness about the Trail's existence and importance.

### **Guanajuato**

- Most of the activity found here related to the Camino's heritage is academic, yet there is also contribution at the community level.
- Has an outstanding architectural heritage.
- Management related to visitor facilities and communication is not focused on the Camino.

- Some contacts are open to the possibility of having tourist services related to the Camino, seeing the value of heritage conservation and economic benefit to communities related to the Camino.
- Would benefit from a presentation or workshop on the basics and value of interpretation.

### **Querétaro**

- Home to an interdisciplinary project led by the University of Querétaro and INAH for research and conservation of Camino elements (including both tangible and intangible elements).
- Has participated in specialists' meeting.
- Only one site features informative plaques.
- Privately-owned hotel has embraced the Camino in its own branding—some information about its significance is available to visitors.

### **Hidalgo**

- Interpretive panels are present, but no evidence of interpretive facilities has been found.
- Little activity associated with the Camino reported.
- Has participated in specialists' meeting.

### **Estado de México**

- Locality of Aculco has a section of the route in good condition, with a historic hacienda where travelers would spend their first night.
- A museum located nearby was created to interpret the Camino but was closed due to a combination of politics and the Pandemic. Local government officials are working to revive this project.
- A series of plaques and panels are present.

### **Mexico City**

- A panel is present at the start of the Camino in Plaza Santo Domingo.

### **Information on the Web**

- Many websites include information about the Camino, either in part or in whole, but none provide orientation information for visitors.

## **Overview of Existing Conditions**

### Interpretive Media and Projects

#### **Logo and Branding**

There are two primary logos used for Camino sites in Mexico. The most commonly used logo depicts a maroon-colored wax seal containing a petroglyph from Cueva de Ávalos. This logo most consistently appears on UNESCO plaques and at some museums and heritage sites (including the privately owned winery mentioned previously). Some panels and brochures also feature this logo.



The second most-used logo is a black and white image depicting a horseman riding in a cart pulled by a horse. This logo was proposed by archaeologist José Luis Punzo in 2011 for the Mexican section of the Camino as part of the project of the World Heritage nomination.

### **Interpretive Facilities**

During their fieldwork, the planning team searched for a wide variety of interpretive media and facilities and discovered a small number of facilities in varying states of activity and nonactivity. The items the planning team tried to locate—general media projects, official plaques, panels, brochures, personal interpretation, museums or exhibit halls, web and app-based interpretive projects—were often absent.

The planning team learned that in the 2010s, the team who worked on the World Heritage nomination also worked on creating interpretive panels as part of a federal project. Many of these panels were installed at Camino sites, but they cannot be found on site today. In addition, there is no evidence of interpretive projects related to interpretation of the Camino’s heritage values. This relates to the fact that, to date, an interpretive plan has not been developed for the Mexican portion of the Camino, and the Management Plan (2012) does not specify ways to address this lack of heritage interpretation.

In their fieldwork, the planning team did not find evidence of:

- Route markers or wayfinding signs
- Camino information in tourism offices of any kind
- Any online orientation information or interpretation for visitors
- Public awareness of the Camino as a cultural heritage, common identity, or community-making element

This indicates a lack of interpretive products, programs, and projects both online and physically along the Camino, and demonstrates that there have been no significant attempts at interpretation, including communication strategies for heritage interpretation along the Camino.

### **Federal Projects**

There have been some interpretive efforts from the federal government and a few existing tourism resources, as described below:

#### *Official Plaques*

Some states installed official plaques related to ELCA’s nomination and subsequent designation as a World Heritage asset. Aside from acting as monuments to the Camino, the plaques don’t communicate its cultural values, meaning, or significance, are unattractive and/or damaged, and are inconsistent from state to state.

#### *Interpretive Panels*

As previously mentioned, there are few interpretive panels along the Camino in existence, and even less that are in good condition. These panels do attempt to tell the history and cultural values of the Camino, but they contain long texts, lack key

messages, and have poor or no illustrations. Additionally, many panels were found to be damaged or missing, or are not unified in their overall brand identity.

### *Video Content*

Through INAH, the federal government created a series of promotional videos about the Camino during the Covid-19 Pandemic, with one video from each state containing segments of the route. These videos are live and available for viewing on YouTube. Additionally, a series of “Conversatorios” or dialogues among experts is in development and will be streamed through INAH’s YouTube Channel.

### **Tourism Resources**

While not interpretive in nature, some companies and institutions suggested resources to support Camino-related tourism.

### **Online Materials**

As part of their research, planning team members reviewed information available about the Camino and its relevance on the Internet, surveying Facebook postings, videos (YouTube), and Mexican websites. The Camino is represented online via:

- Official pages from public and private institutions, including INAH; the National Counsel of Scholars for Camino Real de Tierra Adentro; councils on anthropology, archaeology, and history; and institutions in Guanajuato, Querétaro, Aculco, and Zacatecas
- Tourism promotion pages (privately owned)
- News reports from private firms
- Local historian pages
- Travelogues

Much of the information found online was written by researchers and scholars for an academic audience, not for the lay person. In addition, the planning team noticed that these webpages change frequently, with some appearing and disappearing within a short timeframe.

### **Possible Partners**

In their interviews and research, members of the planning team gathered a list of possible key partners. They identified organizations, key researchers, and personnel who are interested in partnering with the planning teams responsible for interpretation of the Camino, including INAH; organizations and researchers at the inter-state, state, and local level; managers, advisors, and promoters.

### **Recommendations**

Following are the top three recommendations identified in the report:

1. Develop an interpretation seminar or workshop from a binational perspective (inter-state in Mexico and with the US) where academics, managers, and

governmental and local representatives can participate in guiding interpretation of the Camino at a national and international level.

2. Create an interpretive plan for the Camino with the following objectives:
  - Increase local awareness and involvement regarding the Camino and its values, importance, significance, and vulnerability.
  - Communicate the Camino's values, history, and significance from an inclusive perspective, including the knowledge and perspectives of local and Indigenous populations.
  - Diversify media options, reach different key audiences, and increase the availability of information using multiple communication platforms and strategies.
  - Help create networks of communication for people who care about the Camino and its resources along the 10 Mexican states and Mexico City.
3. In addition to any interpretive plan, a tourism development plan should be developed.

## Portfolio of Possible Interpretive Materials

### First Phase

- Interpretive planning workshop
- Printed leaflets for overall Camino
- Primary website
- Social media

### Second Phase

- Interpretive plan for the Camino
- Local workshops at Camino sites
- Printed materials (lesson plans, activity worksheets)
- Mobile application
- Printed leaflets for specific sites
- Printed guidebook for the Camino
- Interpretive panels

### Third Phase

- Personal programming—local sites and regional segments
- Enhanced website
- Enhanced mobile application

# Appendix I—Participants in the Interpretive Planning Process

Troy Ainsworth—CARTA

Sheri Armijo — Friends of El Camino Real Historic Trail, Socorro, NM

Leslie Bergloff — (former) Site Manager, Southern Region, Taylor-Mesilla Historic Property and Fort Selden State Historic Site, NM Historic Sites

Matthew Barbour — Deputy Director, NM Historic Sites

Marisol Benton — Los Portales Museum/Old County Jail, San Elizario, TX

Al Borrego — Cultural Heritage Society of the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro

Don Boyd — Friends of Bosque del Apache, San Antonio, NM

Mark Calamia — Chamizal National Monument (NPS)

Deb Caldwell — Friends of Bosque del Apache, San Antonio, NM

Israel Chavez — Board Chair, Doña Ana Village Association, NM

Henrietta Christmas — NM Genealogical Society

Carol Clark — Park Ranger Interpretive Specialist, National Trails Office (NPS)

George Cordova — CARTA, Mission Trail Alliance, El Paso, TX

Brett Cruse — Director of Historic Sites Operations, Historic Sites Division, TX Historical Commission

Dennis Daily — Department Head, Archives and Special Collections, NM State University

Rhonda Dass, PhD — (former) Site Manager, Southern Region, Taylor-Mesilla Historic Property and Fort Selden State Historic Site, NM Historic Sites

Gina Dello Russo — Save Our Bosque Task Force, Socorro, NM

Sami DiPasquale — Executive Director, Abara, El Paso, TX

Rene Fraire — Los Portales Museum/Old County Jail, San Elizario, TX

Aaron Gardner — Site Manager, Casa San Ysidro, NM

Laura Gonzales — El Rancho de Las Golondrinas, NM

Daniel Goodman — Executive Director, El Rancho de Las Golondrinas, NM

Paul Harden — Friends of El Camino Real Historic Trail and Socorro County Historical Society, Socorro, NM

Cynthia Herhahn — BLM, NM

Gina Hernandez — Chazimal National Monument (NPS)

Sandra Hoogerwerf — Friends of El Camino Real Historic Trail, Socorro, NM

Jeff Harris — Magoffin Home State Historic Site, TX

Terry Heslin — Trails Lead for BLM NM State Office

Katie Hill — BLM, NM

Mark Howe — Cultural Resources Specialist, International Boundary & Water Commission

Margie Ibarra— San Elizario Genealogy & Historical Society, TX

Kelly Jenks, PhD — Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology, NM State University

Jessica Jia — Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge, NM

Sophie Kline — El Rancho de Las Golondrinas, NM

Kay Krehbiel — Friends of El Camino Real Historic Trail, Socorro, NM

Paul Kriehbel — Friends of El Camino Real Historic Trail, Socorro, NM

Daniela Lastra — Casa Ortiz and Casa Apodaca, TX

Aaron Mahr — Superintendent, National Trails Office (NPS)

Alex Mares — interested individual, NM

Magda Maureira — La Purisima Socorro Mission, TX

Guy McClellan — Historian, National Trails Office (NPS)

Shelby McCue — President, El Paso Mission Trail Association, TX

Prince McKenzie — El Paso County Historical Commission, Railroad & Transportation Museum of El Paso, TX

Alexandra McKinney — Instructional Coordinator, Southern Region, Taylor-Mesilla Historic Property and Fort Selden State Historic Site, NM Historic Sites

Becky McWhorter — La Purisima Socorro Mission, TX

Carlos Melendrez — Las Cruces Mural Project, NM

Jennifer Merino — BLM, NM

Donald Monette — Administrator, City of Socorro, NM

Patrick Moore — Chair, History and Heritage, NM Department of Cultural Affairs, and Executive Director, New Mexico Historic Sites

Claire Odenheim — CARTA, NM

Paula Ogden-Muse — Chief of Interpretation, National Trails Office (NPS)

David Ottaviano — House Manager, Gutiérrez-Hubble House, Bernalillo County, NM

Maria Estela Padilla — La Purisima Socorro Mission, TX

Kathleen Pickering — City of Belen, NM

Donna Ramírez — El Paso Mission Trail Association, TX

David Rasch — Deputy Director, Spanish Colonial Arts Museum, NM

Victor Reta — Preservation Officer, City of Socorro, TX

Claudia Rivers — Special Collections Department, University of Texas at El Paso Library, TX

Nick Roll — Interpretive Specialist, National Trails Office (NPS)

Tom Romero — Board member, Museo Cultural de Santa Fe; former Executive Director, Rio Grande National Heritage Area, NM

Randolph Sabaque — Arrowsoul Ambassador (Las Cruces Mural Project), NM

Angelica Sanchez-Clark — Partnership Coordinator, National Trails Office (NPS)

Flora Sanchez — Volunteer, Gutiérrez-Hubble House Alliance, NM

Maya Sanchez — City of San Elizario, TX

Sam Sanchez — Volunteer, Gutiérrez-Hubble House Alliance, NM

Bernie Sargent — Keystone Heritage Park, El Paso, TX

Rodney Sauter — Interpretive Park Ranger, Chazimal National Monument (NPS)

Kim Schaefer — Architect and Project Director/Abara House, Abara, El Paso, TX



D.J. Sevigny — El Paso County Historic Landmark Commission, TX

Deni Seymour — Consultant

Maria Smith Vega — Friends of El Camino Real Historic Trail, Socorro, NM

Elisabeth Stone — Regional Manager, Coronado and Jemez Historic Sites, NM Dept of Cultural Affairs

Shelley Sutherland — Vice President, CARTA; Mission Trail Association; and Commissioner, El Paso County Historical Commission, TX

Mike Taylor — retired NPS

Maria Fernanda Treviño — Outdoor Recreation Planner; Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program (NPS)

Lillian Trujillo — San Elizario Genealogy & Historical Society, TX

Valerie Vacenia — Heritage Tourism Coordinator, El Paso County Economic Development, TX

Priscilla Vasquez — Mission Valley Visitor Center, El Paso, TX

Amanda Walker — Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge, NM

Marie Watkins — Friends of El Camino Real Historic Trail, Socorro, NM

Barbara Welch — El Paso County Historical Commission, TX

Carole Wendler — Deputy Superintendent, National Trails Office (NPS)

Gary Williams — Senior Program Officer, El Paso Community Foundation, TX

Machelle Wood — Magoffin Home State Historic Site, TX

# Appendix J—2023 Stakeholder Meeting Takeaways

## Overview

In March 2023, Conservation By Design released the 75% draft of the interpretive plan to stakeholders and conducted a series of in-person workshops with stakeholders at three locations along the Trail—El Paso, TX, and Socorro and Albuquerque, NM.

Thirty-nine out of the more than 300 people invited were able to attend. This is a brief summary of the key points discussed at those meetings.

The purpose of these meetings was to present the key findings of the 75% draft plan, allow for questions and initial comments, and invite a deeper review of interest exists.

In El Paso, stakeholders discussed:

- There is a need to emphasize that the Trail is made up of the people living along its length, including the organizations and individuals in each of the communities. Individual sites are like pearls on a necklace—each is an important part of the overall story. We must build the capacity of each of the individual sites.
- No centralized center for interpretation is recommended.
- Make sure to include discussion of the report on Trail interpretation in Mexico in the final draft of the interpretive plan.
- Rio Grande Trail—How is it different from ELCA? Rio Grande Trail has recreation as a primary objective, whereas ELCA is a commemoration of an historic route. These two paths overlap in some places, but not everywhere. Trail administrators and Rio Grande Trail promoters look for opportunities where the two overlap to pursue interpretation.
- Need to create a pool of curators, historians, and interpreters available to individual sites along the Trail to serve as peer reviewers.
- Might there be a signature event associated with the Trail that could rotate to different locations along its length? Opportunities to pursue threads such as food ways, performing arts, dancing, trades at various festivals.

In Socorro, stakeholders discussed:

- The main sites in Socorro for potential interpretation are the plaza and the church.
- Other sites nearby include the series of waysides at Point of Lands at Bosque del Apache NWR and the highway rest stop by Fort Craig (where people can view the steel sculpture).
- In absence of a primary association, how can individual sites implement this plan?

In Albuquerque, stakeholders discussed:

- Even with no physical place that serves as a primary hub for Trail interpretation, the various sites serves as pearls/touchstones for its stories. Events and lectures can be important parts of Trail outreach and interpretation.
- Auto tour signs — these are property of each County. They should be replaced with Trail markers instead. Suggestion that NPS take the initiative to replace the highway signs down near Truth or Consequences.
- There could be book clubs/reading clubs for children.
- The Albuquerque Public Library has 2 trunks related to the Trail that are available for checkout. They include: period clothing, books, grinding stones, maps (NHT and historic), curriculum guide, lifestyle tools and objects (dolls, chocolate spinner/frother, candle holder, lice comb, soap, quill and ink), and the NPS Unigrd showing all the National Trails.
- About 15 years ago, NPS sponsored the opportunity for partners to travel the Trail together.
- Teacher-Ranger-Teacher must have an NPS staff person available to liaison with. This is an important consideration of we were to pursue such a position.
- Need to promote the Jr. Ranger program (and include a list of other non-site specific Jr. Ranger programs).
- Need to pursue experiential opportunities for visitors.

## **75% Draft Feedback Survey**

All stakeholders (those in attendance as well as those on the invitation list) were invited to provide more detailed feedback through either comment on the pdf of the plan or by participating in a short survey. A summary of the survey results follows:

Summary: Overall mixed response to the survey. Low engagement with the survey (9 Total Responses) and community meetings (39 attendees), makes it unclear if there is a lack of knowledge of the project allowing stakeholders to see themselves and their organization connected to the Trail. However, there is positive response to the plan and alignment on future need with the top three being:

- Facilitate collaboration among partners
- Update and expand road signage
- Update and expand Trail orientation and interpretive signage

Question 1 – captured names and email addresses

Question 2 – 76% indicated support for the interpretive plan.

Question 3 – 37.5% indicated input was captured from previous input sessions, 37.50% indicated I am not sure and 25% no responses indicating they could not attend remotely.

Question 4 – 33.33% indicated the plan addresses the organization and community needs. 44.44% indicated no and 22.22% I don't know. No responses provided.

Question 5 – Other recommendations gathered six responded:

- Moving volunteers to broader view of story
- Overall, the interpretive plan was very thorough and well developed. Socorro, a small rural community, needs help from experts specially to develop educational resources. Since ECR is an international treasure, why not include some background on Indigenous people and the trail in Mexico?
- Recommendations do not have enough emphasis on on-the-ground improvements to access and way-finding and providing navigable electronic maps for visitor exploration.
- Our organization sees this more of a heritage trail and it appears to be somewhere in the middle without much thought. There is no timeline of the trail.
- Pre-European Contact interpretation to include indigenous histories about the footpaths that predated Columbus. Identifying struggling communities along the Camino and prioritizing investment in THOSE sites, especially Colonia communities. Collaborate and communicate with other divisions and agencies like RTCA -NPS to better coordinate with ongoing work.
- Water and travel

Question 6 – Prioritize the plan's recommendation (listed in descending order)

1. Facilitate collaboration among partners
2. Update and expand road signage
3. Update and expand Trail orientation and interpretive signage
4. Develop agreement with a new primary non-profit Trail partner
5. Facilitate digital exploration of the Trail (website, StoryMap, virtual tours, etc)
6. Increase the diversity of stories and storytellers
7. Develop an online inventory of interpretive resources related to the Trail
8. Facilitate digital exploration of the Trail (website, StoryMap, virtual tours, etc)
9. Promote professional interpretive standards and guidelines and training for Trail partners
10. Provide technical assistance to Trail partners

Question 7 –55.56% indicated they could see their organization's role in implementing the planning objectives and recommendation. 33.33% indicated they did not know. 11.11% indicated no.

Question 8 – Additional comments or Suggestions

- Thanks for the work & eye opening information
- Answer to question 7 - While Socorro wants to help implement the plan our resources are limited. Our Friends group is not large enough to be a partner, but can we participate in the plan? A footnote -- I noted the plans reference Genizaros in the section on inclusivity. Socorro Friends are sponsoring a talk by Enrique Lamadrid on Genizaros for our annual membership mtg April 15.

- In spite of non-committal answers above, I think the plan is broadly hitting the right themes and has sensible recommendations.
- I'm not aware of any Indigenous tribes who lived along the trail, so where you talk about that it makes no sense. How can you reach out to something that wasn't there?
- This was my first experience with the NHT planning process and I was much impressed. Clearly, a non-profit is needed to take the lead in executing the plan.
- Please include DAVA in the future
- I think more partner outreach and communication would be welcome.
- Make sure to include ibwc in this due to canalization project.



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# Interpretive Plan

## El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail



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