



Revision of Feasibility Studies of Oregon, California, Mormon Pioneer, and Pony Express National Historic Trails (Proposed Additional Routes)

May 2016

Significance Statement – Executive Summary

Presented by National Trails Intermountain Region to the National Park System Advisory Board and its Landmarks Committee for consideration and recommendation

Background

The National Trails System Act (P.L. 90-543, as amended through P.L. 111-11) directs the Secretary of the Interior to revise the feasibility and suitability studies of the existing Oregon, California, Mormon Pioneer, and Pony Express national historic trails (NHTs) for consideration of adding certain new routes to the trails. (See Figure 1 for existing trail configuration.)

In all, 78 routes were identified for study (Figure 2). Route maps, narrative descriptions of route alignment, and historical information provided by independent researchers, federal agencies, and NPS researchers were compiled for all 78 study routes. This body of information provides the basis for evaluating the nature and strength of each study route's affiliation to the parent trail(s) for which it is under consideration, and for evaluating its contribution to the national significance of the parent NHT.

To be determined eligible for designation under the preferred alternative, a study route had to contribute to the national significance of the parent trail(s) and show documented use within the parent NHT's established period of significance. Study routes also had to have significant potential for public recreation and historical interest, serve a useful public purpose, bring added value to the National Trails System, and be compatible with adjacent land uses), as required by the National Trails System Act and the National Environmental Policy Act. This submittal, however, addresses only the matter of historical significance.

By the conclusion of the study process, 55 of the 78 study were dismissed from possible designation to any of the trails under the preferred alternative. The 23 eligible routes, having been identified as contributing to the significance of one or more of the NHTs and otherwise feasible, suitable, and desirable, go forward for designation to one or more parent NHTs under this alternative (Figure 3, Table 1). Significance of the three affected trails (Oregon, Mormon Pioneer, and California) and the routes to be added to them is discussed in the following section.

FIGURE 1. Oregon, Mormon Pioneer, California and Pony Express NHTs as they are currently configured.

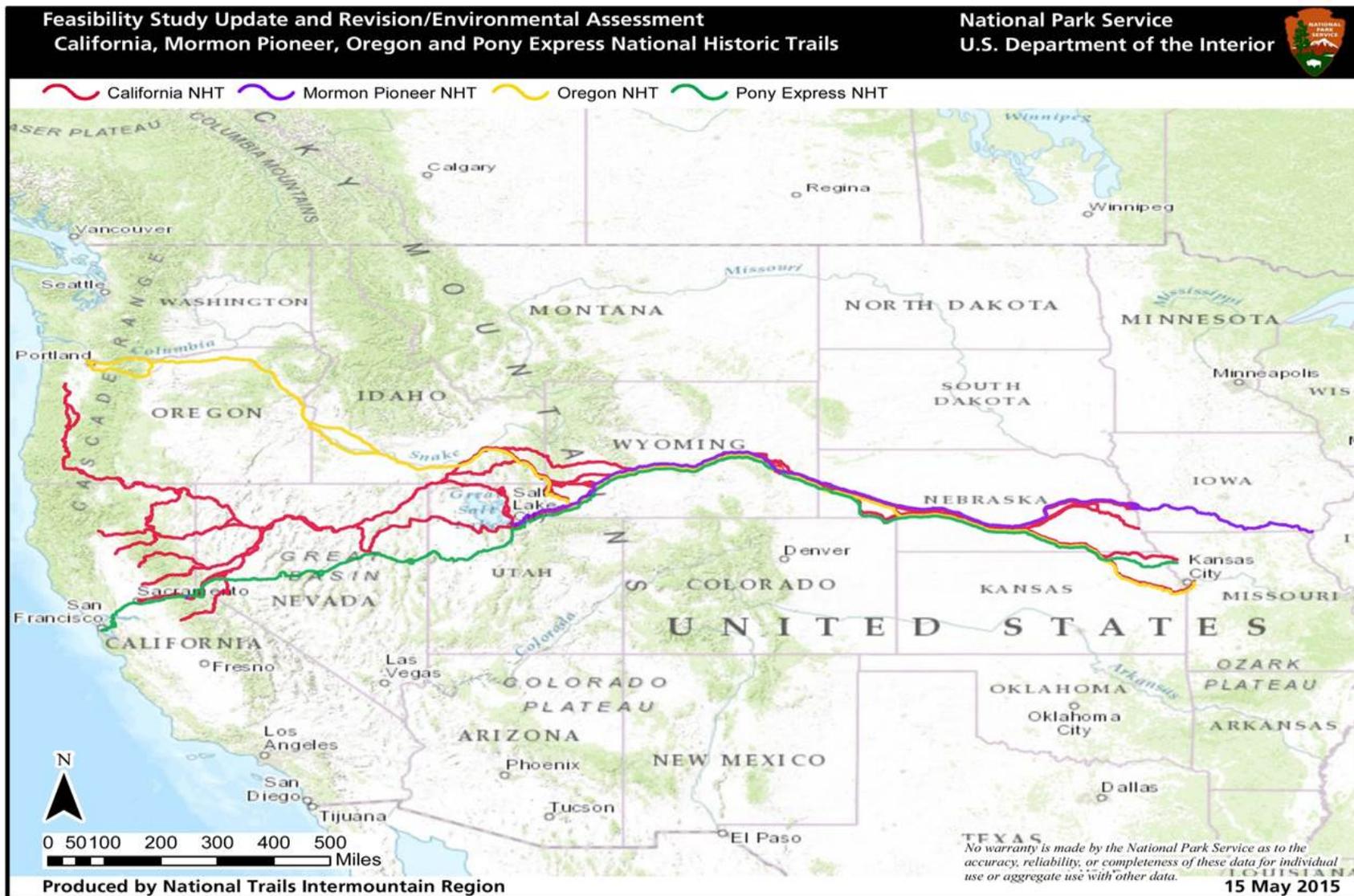
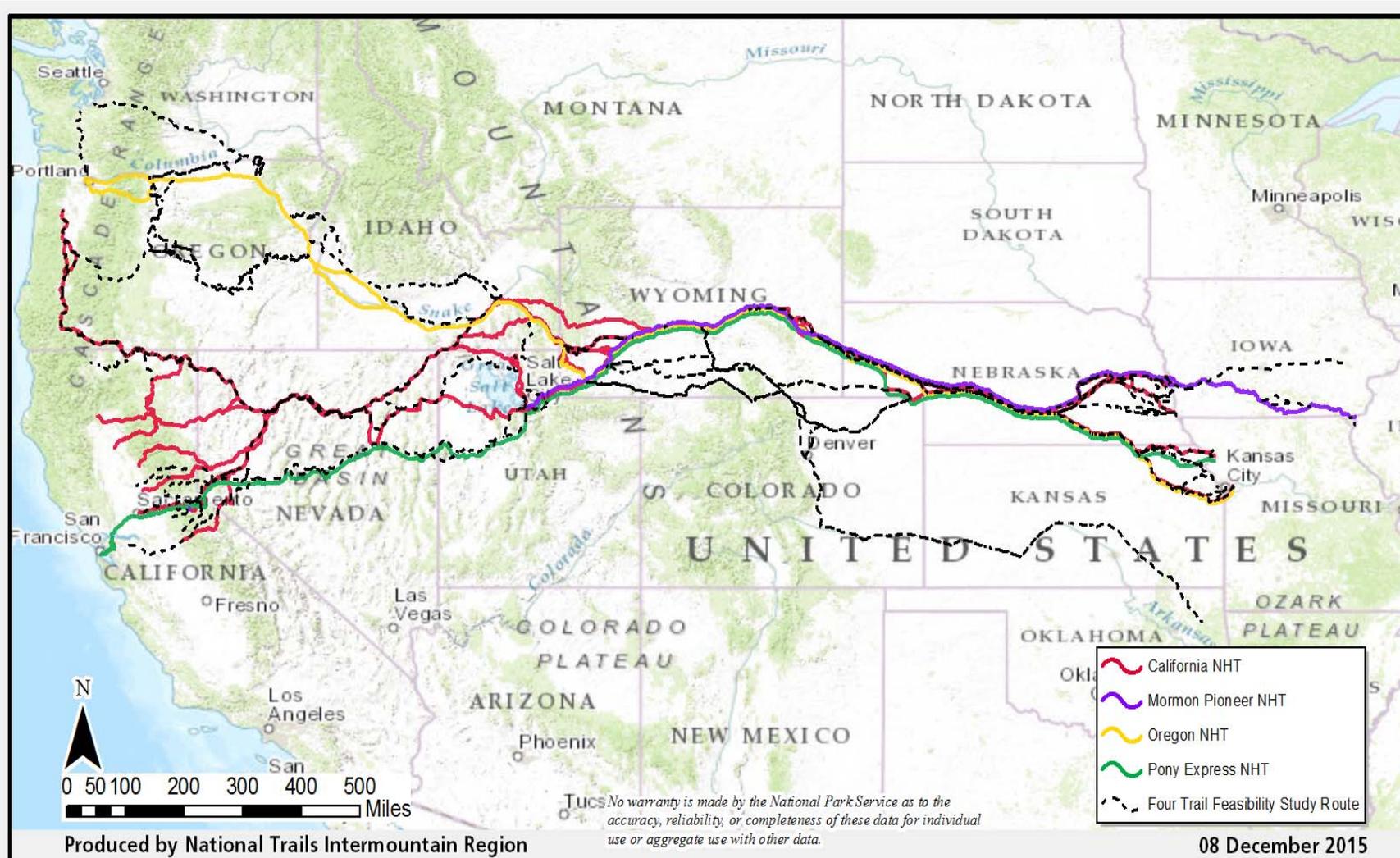


FIGURE 2. All routes considered for addition to the Oregon, Mormon Pioneer, California, and Pony Express national historic trails.



FILE: 4trails_8_5x11land_2015_working_for_PPT

No warranty is made by the National Park Service as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data.

Data Sources: NPS, ESRI, US Census Bureau, NREL
 Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), swisstopo, MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

FIGURE 3. Routes selected for addition to the Oregon, Mormon Pioneer, California, and Pony Express national historic trails.

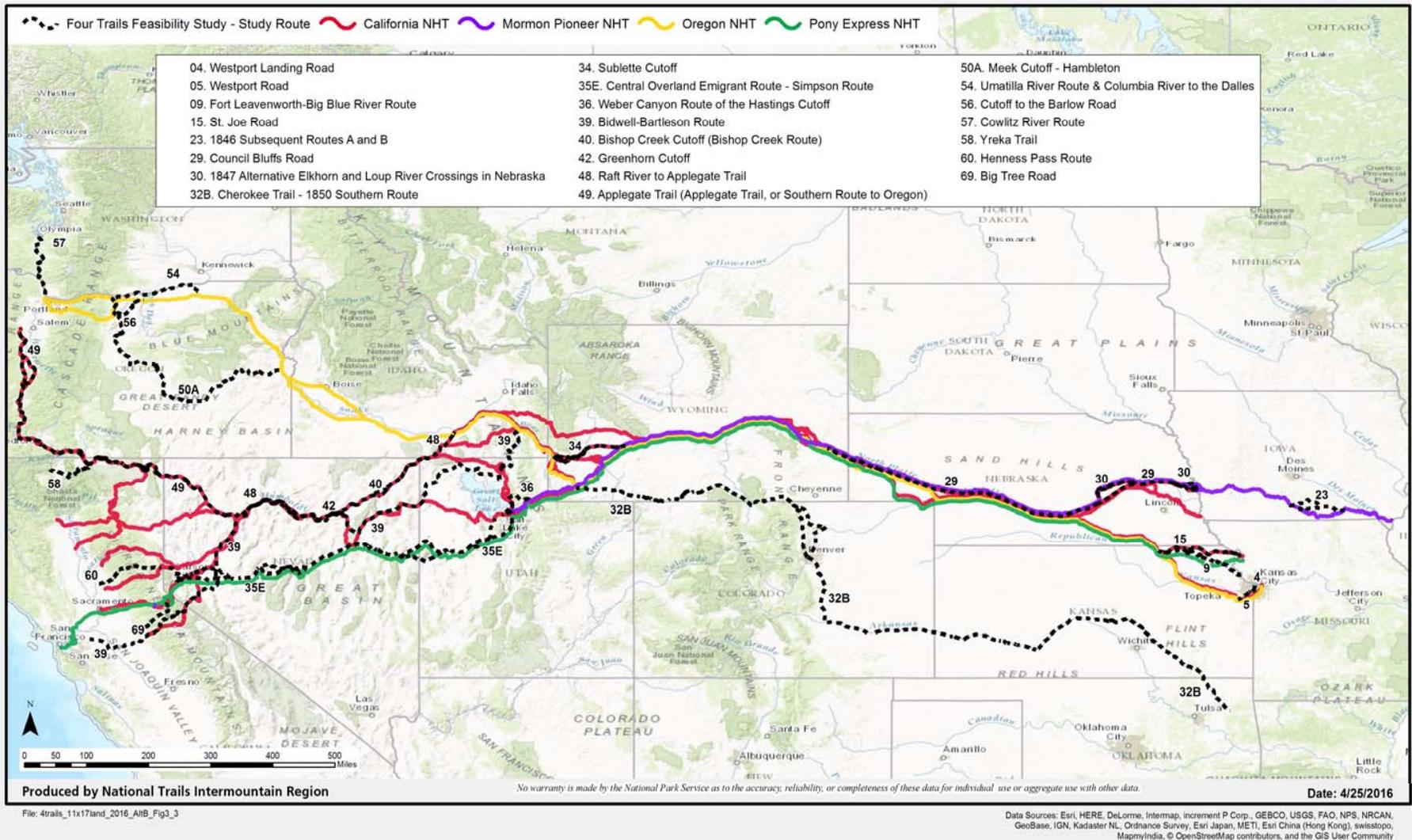


TABLE 1. Study Routes to be Added

Routes Count	OREG Routes Added	CALI Routes Added	MOPI Routes Added	POEX Routes Added
1	Westport Landing Rd.	Westport Landing Rd.		
2	Westport Rd.	Westport Rd.		
3		Fort Leavenworth-Big Blue River Rt.		
4	St. Joe Rd.			
5			1846 Subsequent Routes A & B	
6	Council Bluffs Rd.			
7			1847 Alternative Elkhorn and Loup River Crossings	
8		Cherokee Trail [Selected sections, Okla. To Wyo., plus Southern Rt. Through Wyo.]		
9	Sublette Cutoff			
10		COER [Selected section, Simpson Rt.]*		
11		Weber Canyon Rt. of Hastings Cutoff		
12		Bidwell-Bartleson Rt.		
13		Bishop Creek Rt.		
14		Greenhorn Cutoff		
15	Raft River to the Applegate Trail			
16	Applegate Trail			
17	Meek Cutoff [Hambleton ver.]			
18	Umatilla River Rt. & Columbia River to The Dalles			
19	Cutoff to Barlow Rd.			
20	Cowlitz River Rt.			

Routes Count	OREG Routes Added	CALI Routes Added	MOPI Routes Added	POEX Routes Added
21		Yreka Trail		
22		Hennes Pass Rt.		
23		Big Trees Rd.		
Total Routes Added	11	12	2	0

I. National Significance of the Oregon National Historic Trail

Name of Property: Oregon National Historic Trail

City, State: Multi-state, between the Missouri River and the Willamette Valley of Oregon: Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, Wyoming, Idaho, Utah, Nevada, California, Oregon, Washington (including revisions)

Period of Significance: 1841-1848

NHL Criteria: Criterion 1

NHL Themes:

- I. Peopling Places
 - 3. Migration from outside and within
 - 6. Encounters, conflict, and colonization
- VIII. Changing Role of the United States in the World Community
 - 1. International relations
 - 3. Expansionism and imperialism

Previous Recognition: 1978 Designated as Oregon National Historic Trail (point-to-point primary route between Independence, Missouri, and Willamette Valley, Oregon).

National Historic Contexts:

- I. Cultural Developments: Indigenous American Populations
 - D. Ethnohistory of Indigenous American Populations
- V. Political and military affairs, 1783-1860
 - M. Manifest Destiny
- X. Westward Expansion of the British Colonies and the United States, 1763-1898
 - D. Western trails and travelers

NHL Significance:

- The existing Oregon National Historic Trail is nationally significant for its far-reaching effect on the geographical extent and culture of the United States. The trail is one of the best-known, most heavily traveled routes in the nation's westward migration and a major

determinant in the settlement of the American Northwest. It is particularly associated with the topics of migration and settlement; encounters, conflict, and colonization; the history of American Indians; international relations; and expansion and imperialism. These areas of significance are expanded by the 11 routes proposed for addition to the Oregon NHT:

- The 11 routes to be added to the Oregon NHT all carried a substantial number of emigrants toward the Willamette Valley between 1841 and 1848, and/or were the scene of important events of national interest related to the Oregon emigration of those years. All of the additional routes historically were part of and contribute to the significance of the Oregon Trail.

Integrity: (Please note that per National Trails System Act, historical integrity is not required for national historic trails as it is for national historic landmarks.)

- Variable. Some routes or sections of routes have long stretches of intact ruts and setting (for example, the Applegate Trail through the Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon emigrant Trails National Conservation Area). Others have very limited integrity due to post-emigration development along the route (for example, the Cowlitz River Route), but still offer significant potential for public recreation or historical interest.

Owner of Property: Multiple private and public property owners between the Missouri River and the Willamette Valley and Puget Sound areas.

Acreage of Property: A total of 6,858 trail miles was studied for addition to the Oregon NHT. Of these, 3,150 miles are determined to be nationally significant and to meet other requirements of the National Trails System Act, were used during the trail's defined period of significance, and are eligible for addition to the national historic trail.

II. National Significance of the Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail

Name of Property: Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail

City, State: Multi-state, between Nauvoo, Illinois, and Iowa City in the east and Salt Lake City, Utah, in the west: Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, Wyoming, Utah (including revisions)

Period of Significance: 1846-1847

NHL Criteria: Criteria 1 and 2

NHL Themes:

- I. Peopling Places
 - 3. Migration from outside and within
 - 6. Encounters, conflict, and colonization
- II. Creating Social Institutions and Movements

- 3. Religious institutions
- VIII. Changing Role of the United States in the World Community
 - 1. International relations
 - 3. Expansionism and imperialism

Previous Recognition: 1978 Designated as Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail (point-to-point route between Nauvoo, Illinois, and Salt Lake Valley, Utah)

National Historic Contexts:

- I. Cultural Developments: Indigenous American Populations
 - D. Ethnohistory of Indigenous American Populations
- V. Political and Military Affairs, 1783-1860
 - M. Manifest Destiny
- X. Westward Expansion of the British Colonies and the United States, 1763-1898
 - D. Western trails and travelers

NHL Significance:

- The existing Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail is nationally significant for its far-reaching effect on the geographical extent and culture of the United States. The Mormon migration of 1846-1847 was “one of the most dramatic events in the history of the American Westward expansion” and the Mormons were “one of the principal forces in the settlement of the West.” The trail is particularly associated with the topics of migration and settlement; encounters, conflict, and colonization; the history of American Indians; expansion and imperialism; and religious institutions.
 - The two routes to be added to the Mormon Pioneer NHT are short variants used by groups following weeks behind Brigham Young’s vanguard emigration parties in 1846 and 1847. Both carried a substantial number of emigrants toward the Great Salt Lake Valley during the 1846 spring exodus from Nauvoo and the 1847 advance to the Great Salt Lake Valley. Both were part of and contribute to the significance of the Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail.

Integrity: (Please note that per National Trails System Act, historical integrity is not required for national historic trails as it is for national historic landmarks.)

- Limited. Development and flooding have removed most physical evidence of trail trace, but some remnants exist and the locations and settings appear largely intact.

Owner of Property: Multiple private and public property owners between Nauvoo, Illinois, Iowa City, Iowa, Independence, Missouri, and Salt Lake City, Utah.

Acreage of Property: A total of 3,020 trail miles was studied for addition to the Mormon Pioneer NHT. Of these, 157 miles are determined to be nationally significant and to meet other requirements of the National Trails System Act, were used within the trail’s defined period of significance, and are eligible under the preferred alternative.

III. National Significance of the California National Historic Trail

Name of Property: California National Historic Trail (including revisions)

City, State: Multi-state, between the Missouri River in Missouri and Nebraska, the Grand River in Oklahoma, and the Central Valley of California: Missouri, Oklahoma, Kansas, Colorado, Nebraska, Wyoming, Idaho, Utah, Nevada, California, Oregon (including revisions)

Period of Significance: 1841-1869

NHL Criteria: Criterion 1

NHL Themes:

- I. Peopling Places
 - 3. Migration from outside and within
 - 6. Encounters, conflict, and colonization
- V. Developing the American Economy
 - 1. Extraction and production
- VII. Transforming the Environment
 - 1. Manipulating the environment and its resources
 - 2. Adverse consequences and stresses on the environment
- VIII. Changing Role of the United States in the World Community
 - 3. Expansionism and imperialism

Previous Recognition: 1992 Designated as California National Historic Trail (multiple points of origin and multiple destinations between Missouri River and Central Valley of California)

National Historic Contexts:

- I. Cultural Developments: Indigenous American Populations
 - D. Ethnohistory of Indigenous American Populations
- V. Political and Military Affairs, 1783-1860
 - H. Manifest Destiny
 - I. Mexican War
- X. Westward Expansion of the British Colonies and the United States, 1763-1898
 - D. Western trails and travelers
 - E. The mining frontier

NHL Significance:

- The existing California National Historic Trail is nationally significant for its far-reaching effect on the geographical extent and culture of the United States. The existing trail was “the route of the greatest mass migration in American history,” and “contributed directly to the occupation, settlement, and development of the western part of the United States.” It is particularly associated with the topics of migration and settlement;

encounters, conflict, and colonization; the history of American Indians and Hispanic peoples; extraction and production; manipulating the environment and its resources; adverse consequences and stresses on environment; international relations; and expansion and imperialism. These areas of significance are expanded by the 12 routes proposed for addition to the California NHT:

- The 12 routes to be added to the California NHT carried a substantial number of emigrants between various eastern “jumping-off” points and the Central Valley of California between 1841 and 1869, and/or represent an original pioneering effort in the California emigration. All of the additional routes historically were part of and contribute to the significance of the California Trail.

Integrity: (Please note that per National Trails System Act, historical integrity is not required for national historic trails as it is for national historic landmarks.)

- Variable. Some routes or sections of routes have extremely high integrity (for example, sections of the Cherokee Trail and the Simpson Route). Others have very limited integrity due to post-emigration development along the route (for example, Westport Road and the Fort Leavenworth-Big Blue River Route), but still offer significant potential for public recreation or historical interest.

Owner of Property: Multiple private and public property owners between various “jumping off” points in Missouri, Nebraska, and Oklahoma, and the Central Valley of California.

Acreeage of Property: A total of 6,258 trail miles was studied for addition to the California NHT. Of these, 3,822 miles are determined to be nationally significant and to meet other requirements of the National Trails System Act, fall within the trail’s defined period of significance, and are proposed for addition to the national historic trail.

Since no routes were determined eligible for addition to the Pony Express NHT, the significance of that trail is not addressed here.

Origins of Nomination: The study of additional routes for possible designation to the Oregon, California, Mormon Pioneer, and Pony Express National Historic Trails and revision of existing feasibility studies for those existing trails has been conducted as directed by Section 5302 of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (P.L. 111-11).

Potential for Positive Public Response or Reflection on NHT Program:

- Designation of the 23 study routes may draw additional volunteers and supporters of the four national historic trails.
- Designation of the proposed additional routes is favored by several national and regional historic trail interest and advocacy groups.
- Designation of the proposed additional routes is favored by many business organizations, which believe route designation will attract tourism to their areas.
- Designation of some of the proposed additional routes is favored by some tribal groups and individuals because it will offer them opportunity to interpret the trails from their

own perspectives and to benefit from associated tourism.

Potential for Negative Public Response or Reflection on NHT Program:

- If additional funding is not forthcoming, NPS funding and staffing currently dedicated to administering the Oregon, Mormon Pioneer, California, and Pony Express national historic trails will have to stretch to meet the demands of thousands of miles of new trail.
- Fifty-five other additional routes were studied for designation to one or more of the parent national historic trails but were found not to be significant, not to meet the criteria of the National Trails System Act, and/or not to be suitable, feasible, or desirable for addition to the National Trails System. There may be confusion and negative response to those findings.
- Some constituencies oppose route designation because they view national historic trail management and visitation as interfering with private property rights, energy exploration and development, mineral extraction, grazing, and other customary land use activities. There may be dissatisfaction at expanding the reach of the National Park Service and other federal land management agencies with respect to this trail.
- Designation of the proposed additional routes is opposed by some tribal groups and individuals because management of and visitation to those routes may interfere with the protection and use of important ethnographic resource, or may encourage trespass on tribal lands.

Landmarks Committee Comments:

Landmarks Committee Recommendation: Dr. Young moved, Dr. Chen seconded; unanimous approval of the trails' statement of significance.

Public Comments Favoring Designation (received as of):

Advisory Board Recommendation: