



Oregon, California, Mormon Pioneer, and Pony Express National Historic Trails Long-Range Interpretive Plan

August 2010



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National Trails Intermountain Region &
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National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

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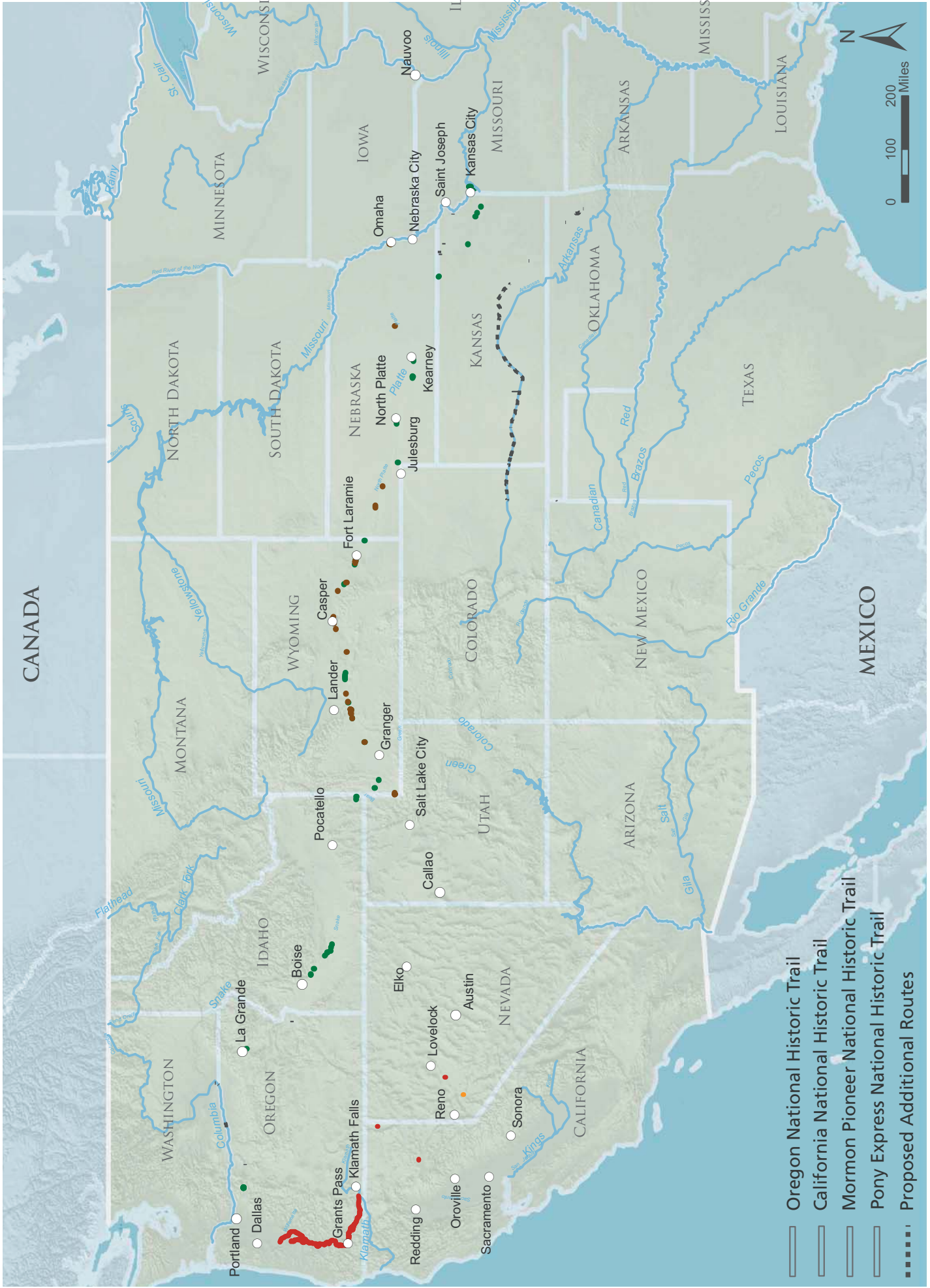
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Introduction

The Oregon and Mormon Pioneer Trails were authorized as national historic trails by Congress in 1978 (National Trails System Act, section 5 (a) (3) and (4) respectively). In 1992 Congress established the California and Pony Express National Historic Trails (National Trails System Act, section 5 (a) (18) and (19) respectively). The National Trails System Act also authorizes the secretary of the interior to enter into cooperative agreements with states, local governments, landowners, and private organizations or individuals to help operate, develop, and maintain trail segments outside federal ownership. These cooperative agreements can include provisions for limited financial or technical assistance to encourage participation in trail management activities. Cooperative agreements can also secure volunteer assistance for the protection and management of the trails and their related resources.

The National Trails Intermountain Region (NTIR) administers these four trails, but does not manage trail resources on a day-to-day basis. The responsibility for managing trail resources remains in the hands of current trail managers at the federal, state, local, and private levels. A representative listing of the trail-related visitor centers and interpretive sites on the four trails appears in Appendix A.

The offices of NTIR are located in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and Salt Lake City, Utah. These offices serve as a clearinghouse for comprehensive trail resource data, provide information on different resource management strategies used at sites throughout the corridors, and guide the development of the interpretive program for the trails. In addition, these offices can assist partners in overall coordination efforts, as well as the preparation of memorandums of understanding, cooperative agreements, and site certifications.



Chimney Rock, managed today as a national historic site by the Nebraska State Historical Society, was one of the most recognized landmarks along the Oregon, California, and Mormon Pioneer trails.

Planning Background

As required by the National Trails System Act, a Comprehensive Management and Use Plan was completed for the four national historic trails in 1999. This plan provides broad-based policies, guidelines, and standards for administering the four trails to ensure the protection of trail resources, their interpretation, and their continued use. Subsequent planning efforts tier off of the Comprehensive Management and Use Plan and provide more detailed recommendations and guidance. Among the many recommendations in the Comprehensive Management and Use Plan is one calling for a trails-wide interpretive plan.

A long-range interpretive plan (LRIP) provides an overall vision and basis for decision-making relating to interpretation and education media. The LRIP is a component of a Comprehensive Interpretive Plan (CIP), which is described in NPS Directors Orders-6. To date, no comprehensive interpretive planning has been conducted for any of the four national historic trails. Interpretive media and program development has generally been the result of individual interest and available funding, without an overall strategy for identifying and meeting specific goals. Comprehensive planning also would ensure that interpretation of any new resources on routes added to the designated trails would complement existing media and programs.

In March of 2009, the Omnibus Public Land Act became Public Law 111-11. This law calls for a number of new suitability and feasibility studies that would make recommendations on proposed additions to the existing trails. These studies are to begin in 2010, and will undoubtedly have a number of implications for this LRIP.

Using the trails-wide and trail-specific purpose and significance statements, along with the primary interpretive themes and visitor experience goals, this LRIP articulates a vision for the interpretive future of the trails, and makes recommendations for ways that NTIR can better serve their many partners and audiences, and be successful in achieving management goals and helping people make meaningful connections with resources and stories.

Work on this document was initiated in July 2007, with a planning workshop held in Salt Lake City. A Project Agreement between the Harpers Ferry Center and NTIR was signed in January 2008. A second workshop, to develop plan recommendations, was held in Salt Lake City in July 2009.

This LRIP is different from those usually developed for individual parks or sites. This is because the NTIR administers the national historic trails, but does not manage any specific trail-related sites. In addition, the huge geographic areas traversed by the trails, along with the large number of trail partners made it impossible (with existing funds) to visit or address each site and to meet with all of the partners.

Despite these issues, however, participation of trail partners was deemed critical in the development of this LRIP. To gain partner participation in the process in the most economical way, the planning team developed two information gathering strategies. First, a list of seven questions was developed and emailed to trail partners and affiliated federally recognized American Indian tribes regarding interpretive and educational topics. Second, members of the planning team conducted a workshop in 2008 at the annual meeting of the Oregon and California Trail Association (OCTA), and elicited comments from members of the National Pony Express Association (NPEA). A representative selection of significantly impacted American Indian tribes that are affiliated with the trails were contacted. The information gathered was then tabulated and used in the development of the recommendations.

The specific questions posed to the trail partners and tribes were:

- 1) In your opinion, what areas (topics) of trail interpretation need the greatest attention?
- 2) What ideas do you have to better connect the information and interpretation about the many trail sites?
- 3) Other than continuing to provide project funding, technical support and guidance, what can the National Park Service trail offices (Santa Fe and Salt Lake City) do to better promote the trail as a whole, or your site(s) in particular?
- 4) How can we attract and engage broader and more diverse audiences to the trails' stories?
- 5) How can interpretation serve to get children interested in trail history – getting kids on the trail and having a memorable experience?
- 6) What improvements can be made in getting trail information to prospective and virtual visitors?
- 7) In the next 5-10 years, what would you like to see developed in the areas of new interpretive/educational media or programs for the trails?

This LRIP is not an end in itself, but rather it establishes an overall framework for the planning and design of interpretive and education media and programs for the next five to ten years. It also provides a list of action items for ways NTIR can work to better help the trail partners in the areas of technical assistance, new technologies, communications and marketing, relationship building, and addressing diverse audiences.



Pilot Peak, located in the Pilot Range along the Utah-Nevada border, served not only as a guiding landmark, but also supplied life-sustaining water for pioneer wagon trains after crossing the Great Salt Lake Desert on the Hastings Cutoff of the California Trail.



Planning Foundation

Vision for the Trails

The Oregon, California, Mormon Pioneer, and Pony Express National Historic Trails represent in part the heritage of the westward expansion of the United States. To preserve this heritage, and to provide opportunities for people to understand and experience this part of American history, partners from public agencies, as well as representatives from nonprofit organizations and private landowners, work together to protect, maintain, and promote the trail corridors. This collaborative effort is necessary to ensure that future generations will be able to appreciate and enjoy trail resources.

Purpose and Significance of the Trails

Purpose statements describe the reasons for which an area was established. These statements are based on the enabling legislation and legislative history.

Significance is summarized in statements that capture the essence of a site's importance to our natural and cultural heritage. Knowing a site's significance helps to set resource protection priorities, identify primary interpretive themes, and develop desirable visitor experiences.

The following paragraph presents the shared significance of all four national historic trails. It is followed by purpose and significance statements for each of the individual trails.

The Oregon, California, Mormon Pioneer, and Pony Express Trails helped the United States to expand west of the Missouri River across the homelands of independent American Indian nations and claimed by Great Britain, Spain, France, Russia, and Mexico. The trails facilitated American settlement of those lands and encouraged the development of a transcontinental transportation and communications network. In doing so, they opened the West to resource exploitation and economic development, intensified the political and economic tensions between North and South that led to the Civil War, brought about extinguishment of Indian title to western lands, and dramatically altered American cultures and life ways. The modern configuration of today's continental United States, and the economic, political, and social effects of that configuration, results largely from the establishment and historical use of these four trails.

Oregon National Historic Trail

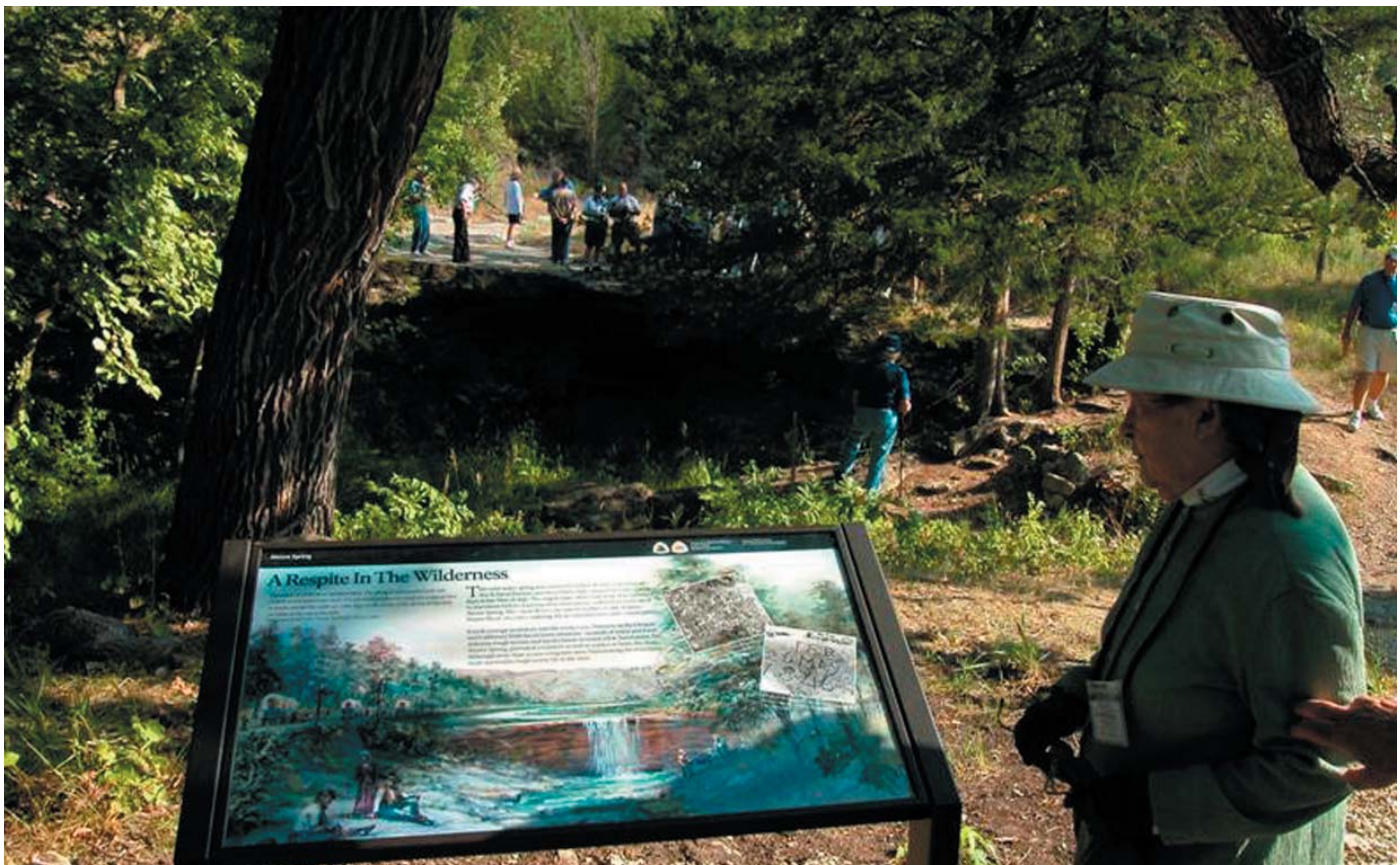
The purposes of the trail are to:

- identify, preserve, and interpret the sites, route, and history of the Oregon Trail for all people to experience and understand.
- recognize the westward movement of emigrants to the Oregon country as an important chapter of our national heritage.

The trail is significant because:

- it was the first trail that demonstrates the feasibility of moving families, possessions, and cultures by wheeled vehicles across an area previously perceived as impassable.

- it was the corridor for one of the largest and longest emigration of families in the history of the United States.
- it is a symbol of American westward traditional migration embodied in traditional concepts of pioneer spirit, patriotism, and rugged individualism.
- it strengthened the United States' claim to the Pacific Northwest.
- use of the trail and resulting settlement significantly contributed to changes in peoples, cultures, and landscapes.
- the route, followed earlier by American Indians and western explorers and travelers, provided a foundation for American transportation and communication systems west of the Mississippi River.



Located along the banks of the Big Blue River in northeastern Kansas, Alcove Spring was a popular camp area for emigrant wagon trains waiting for the spring floods to recede in order to continue their journey to Oregon and California.

California National Historic Trail

The purposes of the trail are to:

- enable all people to envision and experience, in a coherent and convenient way, the heritage and impacts of the western overland migration.
- encourage preservation of its history and physical remains.

The trail is significant because:

- it is one of the major highways of the 19th century, which provided a 2,400-mile path for emigrants to the West. The route itself and the resulting settlement significantly contributed to changes in people, cultures, and landscapes.
- one of the largest overland migrations in American westward expansion used the trail as a result of the California gold rush.



As California Trail emigrants reached the eastern rise of the Sierra Nevada Range, multiple routes branched from the primary route providing opportunities for them to reach various destinations. This view of the Sierra Nevada along the Carson Route characterizes the struggles emigrants experienced climbing up and over two high elevation passes before reaching the interior valleys of California.

Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail

The purposes of the trail are to:

- identify, preserve, and explain the sites, route, and history of the Mormon Pioneer Trail for all people to experience and understand.
- recognize the 19th century migration of Mormon emigrants to the Valley of the Great Salt Lake as an important aspect of our national heritage.

The trail is significant because:

- the trail was used by cohesive Mormon companies seeking religious freedom, with the intent of locating their new Zion in the Far West.

- the trail was traveled/developed by communities or companies of people with the intent of bringing church members to settle the Valley of the Great Salt Lake and surrounding regions, and put a theocratic society in control of the Great Basin, and that distinctive society is still influential today.
- The Mormons, in using the trail in both directions, improved the route and provided assistance along the way.
- use of the trail and resulting settlement significantly contributed to changes in peoples, cultures, and landscapes.



Known today as Martin's Cove, this site respects the tragedy that transpired here on October 19, 1856. The Martin and Willie Mormon handcart companies chose to ford the North Platte River in bitterly cold weather just the day before. On the 19th, a blizzard dropped between 12 and 18 inches of snow and the temperatures dropped well below zero. Before rescue parties from Salt Lake City could reach them, a total of 576 people had perished in the bitter cold.

Pony Express National Historic Trail

The purposes of the trail are to:

- identify, preserve, and explain the sites, route, and history of the Pony Express for all people to experience and understand.
- commemorate the rapid mail delivery that linked eastern and western states.

The trail is significant because:

- the Pony Express reinforced the viability of a central United States overland communication system and was a forerunner of a transcontinental telegraph and railroad.
- the Pony Express required good organizational skills, and the horse-and-rider relay system became the

nation’s most direct and fastest means of east-west communications before completion of the telegraph system.

- the Pony Express played a vital role in aligning California with the Union by providing a link between the eastern states and California just before the Civil War; it allowed westerners to develop and maintain a sense of contact with the East at a critical time in United States history.
- the Pony Express made important contributions to journalism, commerce, and personal domestic and international communication by providing news and original documents in a timely manner.
- the legendary feats, stories, and experiences of the lone riders and station keepers supplied the bases for an enduring image of the American West.



The 150th anniversary of the first ride of the Pony Express commenced on April 15, 2010, at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C. Re-riders from the National Pony Express Association delivered mail to congressional representatives from each of the eight states the historic trail passes through.

Trails-Wide Interpretive Themes

Primary interpretive themes are those ideas/concepts that are critical for achieving visitor understanding and appreciation of the significance of four trails. Primary themes do not include everything that may be interpreted, but they do provide the foundation from which programs and media are developed. All interpretive efforts, through both personal and non-personal services, should relate to one or more of the primary themes. Effective interpretation results when visitors are able to connect concepts (intangibles) with resources (tangibles) and derive something meaningful from the experience.

The following interpretive themes apply to all four trails and are critical to visitor understanding and appreciation of their importance. These theme statements are followed by trail-specific sub-themes.



Landforms and landmarks, such as Courthouse and Jail Rocks, along the common corridor for the four national historic trails were used by pioneers as guideposts to help keep them on the path to fulfilling their dreams for a new life in the American West.

- These corridors were the “superhighways” of westward expansion during the mid-19th century, a period of “manifest destiny” when the nation realized its dream of stretching from ocean to ocean.
- The geographically central corridor of these four historic trails (up the Platte, the North Platte, and the Sweetwater Rivers to South Pass) has been called “the best natural road in the world.” Segments of this corridor had been used for thousands of years by American Indians and in the mid-19th century became the transportation route for successive waves of European trappers, missionaries, soldiers, teamsters, stagecoach drivers, Pony Express riders, and overland emigrants bound for opportunity in the Oregon territory, the Great Basin, and the California goldfields.
- Though overland traffic declined dramatically after the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869, the trail corridors laid the basis for communication and transportation systems that are still in use today. Railroads, modern highways, pipelines, and powerlines still follow the general routes of the old emigrant trails.
- Landforms, landmarks, forage, wood, and water dictated the paths of migration. Numerous factors, such as weather, flooding rivers, adequate pasture for draft animals, and water for animals and humans affected the organization and outfitting of wagon trains and the Pony Express.
- The influx of close to 500,000 emigrants and communications corridors across and into the traditional homelands of the American Indians undermined the latter groups’ political and economic independence in the trans-Mississippi West, resulting in resource losses, disease, violence, increased intertribal conflicts, and loss of lifestyle.
- There was a broad range of intercultural contact ranging from mutually beneficial to violent conflict that led to open warfare.
- All 19th century overland travelers shared similar experiences while traveling west: the drudgery of walking or riding hundreds of miles, suffocating dust, violent thunderstorms, mud, temperature extremes, bad weather, poor forage, fear of Indians, accidents, sickness, and death. These experiences — frequently recorded in journals, diaries, and letters — became a part of our national heritage and inspired a romantic movement in art, literature, and cinema that has had an enormous effect on American popular culture.
- After surviving the journey, and reaching their destinations, emigrants still faced hardship, hard work, and deprivation to realize their dreams.
- The impact to the indigenous tribes was devastating. After suffering through the introduction of alien diseases and loss of homeland, the tribes were placed on reservations. The story of survival of the American Indian is a story that covers all aspects of human strengths. The dreams of the emigrant may have been attained, but the dreams of American Indians were altered as well.

Trail-Specific Sub Themes

Oregon National Historic Trail

- Between 1841 and 1869, more than 250,000 Americans traversed the Oregon Trail to escape economic adversity, or to obtain better farmlands.
- The Oregon Trail was the harbinger of America’s westward expansion and the core of one of the largest and longest mass migrations in U.S. history.
- In 1836 when Presbyterian missionaries Marcus Whitman and Henry Spalding took their wives over the Oregon Trail to establish Indian missions in the Oregon country; they proved the feasibility of moving families and wheeled vehicles across an area previously perceived as impassable.
- Farming families, with their oxen and wagons, traveled the Oregon Trail to reach the promise of rich, fertile land in the Oregon Territory.
- The waves of migration to Oregon strengthened U.S. claims to the Pacific Northwest. By 1846, when the treaty with Great Britain established the northern boundary of the United States at the 49th parallel, more than 5,000 emigrants had settled in the fertile Willamette Valley.

California National Historic Trail

- Between 1841 and 1869, more than 200,000 Americans traversed the California Trail to escape economic adversity, obtain better farmlands, or get rich quick in the gold rush.
- Although most of the overland emigrants to Oregon and California through 1848 sought to establish farms and permanent homes, a majority of the forty-niners were single young men, hoping to make their fortunes in the goldfields of the Sierra Nevada and return home to the East.
- The California Trail emigrants represented various cultures, ethnic groups, religious denominations, educational backgrounds, and economic interests.
- The rapid influx of Americans along the California Trail influenced national politics, international relations and boundaries, and U.S. policy toward American Indians. Settlement was so rapid that California became a state in 1850 without having been a territory.

Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail

- The migrating Mormons were bound together by a common faith and a desire for religious freedom. This was a movement of an entire people, an entire religion, and an entire culture driven by religious fervor and determination.
- Unlike other elements of the westward expansion, the cohesive Mormon companies showed clear lines of authority and a sense of community.
- The Mormons viewed themselves as a people apart and self-sufficient. Unlike other wagon trains, the Mormons did not hire professional guides, choosing instead to follow existing trails, use maps and accounts of early explorers, and gather information from travelers and frontiersmen they met along the way.
- Through the construction of bridges, ferries, and supply stations, the Mormons improved conditions and communications along the trail for travelers moving both east and west, and Salt Lake City became a resupply stop on the trail to California.
- The Mormon community funded continued migration of poor church members and converts from Europe. About half of all Mormon emigrants came directly from foreign countries.
- The influx of Mormons into the Salt Lake basin and beyond has resulted in a politically and socially conservative block in the Intermountain and upper Southwest regions that survives today – tying the present with the past.

Pony Express National Historic Trail

- The Pony Express offered the fastest transcontinental mail service of its day, providing a vital, all-season communication link between the east and west during a critical period in American history.
- The organization and implementation of this complex system required the contributions of hundreds of people — among them district superintendents, clerks, station keepers, stock tenders, and riders — a stark contrast to the popular image of the solitary express rider.
- The route of the Pony Express had to reconcile requirements for favorable topography and water sources with the need to minimize distance.
- With the completion of the transcontinental telegraph, the Pony Express discontinued operations after only 19 months in service. Yet the trail proved the feasibility of a central overland transportation route and played a vital role in aligning California with the Union just before the Civil War.
- The Pony Express stations and riders became targets of Indian frustrations due to violent contacts on the California Trail.
- Pony Express riders became celebrities in their own time, due to their feats of endurance, skill and bravery, contributing to the popular culture and mythology of the American West.

Interpretive Program Goals

In concert with our partners, the staff of NTIR will work to achieve the following goals:

- Provide a variety of interpretive media, experiences, and facilities for people planning to visit or use the trails.
- Ensure that everyone knows what the NTIR does, what types of services are provided, and how to contact the staff.
- Develop interpretive and visitor experience threads that connect trail resources and sites.
- Provide information, interpretation, and education material from a broad perspective of trail experiences and impacts.
- Appeal to broader and more diverse audiences.
- Incorporate modern technology in delivering information, interpretation, and education messages.
- Address the applicable goals of the “Decade for the National Trails” initiative (see Appendix B).
- Improve communication.
- Assist with training and program development.
- Utilize evaluation tools and services for media and programs.
- Promote greater and easier consultation with federal, state, and tribal entities.
- Incorporate multiple perspectives in trail interpretation.
- Promote design continuity, or branding, with our partners for the various on-site interpretive media so that visitors can recognize that all sites from one end of the trail to the other are part of a national historic trail.



Exhibits at the Old Freighters Museum in Nebraska City, Nebraska, help visitors learn about the National Trails System and the connection between the Pony Express and the frontier freighting firm of William Russell, Alexander Majors, and William Waddell. The building served as the firm’s operation headquarters from 1855 to 1859.

Partnership Expectations

The success of the LRIP will depend in large part on the continued and improved relationships with the many trail partners. Partnerships are successful when all parties contribute to and gain from the alliance, when all parties are involved in defining goals and responsibilities, and when there is a continuous liaison among all parties.

NTIR asks that partners:

- Notify us when replacements are needed for interpretive media (wayside exhibits, signs, passport stamps, stocks of publications and auto tour route signs).
- Notify us if they become aware of problems with the effectiveness of any of our products or programs so that we can correct/improve them.
- Make sure that their interpretive staffs are appropriately trained and know the subject matter they are interpreting.
- As subject matter experts, assist us by providing feedback on interpretive media.
- Provide information that characterizes the types of visitor they come into contact with (visitor profile) at their locales; e.g., when do people visit, numbers, singles or families, where are they from, racial and age information, are they following trail or inadvertently encountering it? Are they using our media? This could entail conducting visitor surveys that identify trail-related visitor information.
- Be inclusive and present multiple perspectives/balanced interpretation on trails events, impacts, stories, themes etc.
- Consider developing site-specific trail interpretation within the

context of trails-wide interpretive themes presented in this plan.

- Work with NPS to provide continuity in “branding” design for various on-site interpretive media so that visitors can recognize that sites are part of the National Trails System.
- Be stewards of the resources by keeping sites physically accessible and inviting to visitors; by first protecting the integrity of the historic landscape when considering where on-site interpretive media and other developments might be desirable and appropriate; by placing interpretive wayside exhibits and other modern intrusions so they are not intrusive and do not interfere with photographs of the subject; by working toward achieving the objectives of the National Trails System Act.
- Consider providing reciprocal web links to NPS trail websites. (These are: www.nps.gov/oreg, [/cali](http://www.nps.gov/california), [/poex](http://www.nps.gov/poex), and [/mopi](http://www.nps.gov/mopi))

In order to provide a quality visitor experience, NTIR will:

- Provide trails-wide orientation and wayfinding materials (signs, auto tour route guides, brochures, maps, etc.).
- Provide technical expertise and training for interpretive planning and media development.
- Work with our partner subject matter experts in terms of presenting historically accurate information and stories.
- Keep in contact with site/visitor facility partners in terms of their needs, mutual concerns, and issues.



Recommendations

The following is a description of program and media recommendations designed to further define, support, and communicate the trails' purpose, significance, goals, partnership expectations, and interpretive themes. Implementation of these recommendations will help ensure that visitors are well prepared and informed, and that they will be able to develop meaningful connections with tangible and intangible resources.

Technical Assistance

New Tasks/Projects

Year 1

- **Direct the general public and partners to repositories of trail-related historic images for use.** Develop a representative inventory to reference various repositories of historic image collections, emphasizing that copyright and reproduction/use fees may apply.

In addition to the inventory, NTIR would continue to assist the public in finding/acquiring “special” images.

Years 2-5

- **Conduct interpretive planning and interpretive skills workshops.** NTIR staff could work with the various regional NPS Interpretive Development Program teams to offer training opportunities whereby participants could become certified interpreters. Training could be conducted at specific sites, at sites within certain geographic areas, and especially to members of various partner organization chapters.

Other training or workshop venues could include the various programs offered through the National Association for Interpretation. Here, participants can take advantage of training programs already in place, or NTIR could offer their own programs at some of the national, regional, or sectional meetings.

- **Work with trail partners to provide packaged traveling exhibits for use by trail partners.** NTIR would work with interested trail partners to develop trail specific exhibits and collaborate on methods to cover shipping costs. NTIR would collaborate with trail partners to advertise these exhibits. Partners could handle the scheduling, contact information, and distribution of the exhibits.

The traveling exhibits mentioned above would be different from the traveling trunks generally used for school groups. While traveling trunks could certainly be a part of this program, they are more labor intensive to develop and maintain. Besides, a number of trail facilities already have traveling trunk programs, although NTIR might play a more valuable role in providing a list of these types of media on their website.

On-Going Tasks/Projects

- **Complete development of guidebook program.** Five trail interpretive guides have been completed by NTIR staff, and four remain to complete the series. The completed volumes are also available online as PDF files. Each of these guidebooks will need to be continually updated as new areas are added and as driving routes and other conditions change. Consideration should be given to eventually adding GPS coordinates for listed sites along each trail.

- **Provide assistance with site development and design.**
NTIR staff should continue to work with partners to help them determine the best procedures to use for site development. Plans would provide for positive and meaningful visitor experiences (e.g., where to park, how to manage visitation use, and how to provide outstanding and relevant information to visitors etc.).
- **Share historical and interpretive expertise with partners.**
This would involve helping partners with the planning, researching, writing, layout/design, and production of various types of interpretive media. It would include information regarding various types of new technologies and their uses. Assistance also could be for finding graphic and bibliographic materials.
- **Work with partners to develop Challenge Cost Share Program project applications.**
NTIR will continue to assist partners through the cost share program with the development of various types of site specific interpretive media. Since many of the requests are for wayside exhibits, NTIR needs to continue its efforts to ensure that partners know the proper maintenance practices; that many of their wayside exhibit panels can be replaced; and that backup copies may already exist.
- **Respond to requests for technical assistance from outside organizations.**
This would include continuing to respond to a variety of trail-related requests from entities beyond trail partners. In cases where the expertise does not lie within the NTIR, a list of contacts (including websites) could be developed and maintained.
- **Provide guidance for conducting tribal consultation and for seeking assistance and advice on a formal and informal basis.**
NTIR staff would offer this assistance on request through meetings and/or workshops with individual sites or multiple partners.
- **Review documents for technical and historical accuracy.**
NTIR staff will continue to provide this service upon request. These documents could include various types of research reports, or planning and design documents for interpretive media and programs.
- **Assist partners with planning and organization of special events.**
This can include help with special publications and media, or referring event sponsors to appropriate sources for equipment, supplies, etc.

In cases where staff expertise is not available, NTIR should refer partners to appropriate contractors or other entities such as Harpers Ferry Center.

New Technology

New Tasks/Projects

Year 1

- **Develop interactive site and trails map for public on-line use.**
This would assist visitors with overall trail and site orientation, education, and trip planning. It would include a searchable database. Links to partner websites would be included.

A more detailed version (accessible through different means) would be maintained and made available for researchers.

- **Develop downloadable messages that people can use as they travel.**
NTIR staff should explore the many options available for providing trail interpretation through electronic means. This would include offering material that travelers could download to their iPods, cell phones, GPS navigational units, or other current and future portable devices. The downloadable messages could include audio and video as well as still image features.

This information would complement other forms of on-site interpretive media, and in some cases it might provide the only means of communicating interpretive messages.

Years 2-5

- **Develop virtual trail-related/museum tours for the websites.**
These tours, which could include video segments and still images targeted for various age groups (kids/adults). They could include tours of trail segments, museum exhibits, living history programs, or special events. The tours also would be developed for use on the NTIR or various partner websites.

Communications and Marketing

New Tasks/Projects

Year 1

- **Put research reports (as appropriate) from NPS-funded projects on the trail websites.**
Restrictions may apply to some material. For example, some documents such as trail journals may be copyright protected; therefore, these and other documents may be better suited for placement on an internal website for use by researchers.

Years 2-5

- **Communicate our portfolio of interpretive products, services, and programs.**
This would be done to demonstrate the variety of services, products, and interpretive media that NTIR can assist our partners in developing.

On-Going Tasks/Projects

- **Update and maintain an internet listing of visitor experience opportunities along the trails.**
While the listings cannot be fully comprehensive, they should be updated to include new museums, visitor centers, interpretive sites, etc.
- **Communicate our identity and mission within the NPS.**
This would include better communication with NPS trails parks and the NPS in general. It also will involve taking advantage of opportunities to promote awareness of NTIR and the National Trails System within the regional offices and the Washington, D.C. office.

- **Continue to ask partners to provide information about specific events.**
These can be posted on the trail websites.
- **Communicate info about the national historic trails and the National Trails System to broader audiences.**
This would include the development of media such as rack cards, press releases about special events, general and specific postings on websites, information about new products and recent accomplishments. In addition to providing this type of information on the Internet, it would be made available for inclusion in tribal newspapers and partner newsletters.
 - **Assist with the preparation of the NTIR annual report or newsletter.**
One of the main objectives would be to inform the public about NTIR interpretive activities and partner accomplishments. The report or newsletter would be posted on trail websites and mailed to affiliated tribes and specific partner and non-partner organizations.
- **Maintain and periodically update a traveling exhibit for use at special events.**
This could be designed to function as a staffed or unstaffed exhibit. The purpose would be to provide information about the trails and the National Trails System. It would be used at a variety of events such as trail conferences, National Association of Interpretation conferences, specific site commemorations/celebrations, or at tribal activities and/or events.
- **Continue supporting and updating the Eastern National passport program for the four trails.**
In addition, the possibility of developing individual passport books for each trail should be explored. Individual site stamps (which meet standards to be developed) could be available at key venues. Such a program could increase visitation to trail specific sites; however, it would require additional monitoring and maintenance.
- **Maintain a list of current recommended readings on the trail websites.**
This could be in the form of an annotated bibliography, which could be periodically updated.
- **Take advantage of opportunities to promote awareness of NTIR and NPS through organizations such as National Parks and Conservation Association.**
- **Work closely with the various State Departments of Transportation, local highway authorities, and partners to develop and implement highway sign plans using the NTIR standards.**
This includes assuring sign standards are easily available to partners on the websites and other media, and sign protocols are used consistently along all four trails. Interpretation will work closely with planning and development to assure that there is consistent Auto Tour Route signing across the trails, and that Local Tour Route and site signing is encouraged to enhance visitor use and experience.

Topics and Audiences

This section includes topics for further study and topics that have been underrepresented in NTIR interpretive efforts, plus ways to attract and engage broader and more diverse audiences and strengthen/broaden our understanding of their historic relationships with trails.

New Tasks/Projects

Year 1

- **Strengthen interpretation of emigrant relationships with and impacts on American Indians.**
Engage federally recognized tribes in developing interpretive media to tell their trail-related histories.
- **Develop Junior Ranger programs for children.**
These programs could be trail specific and available to download from the Internet. These programs might also be linked with the passport program discussed earlier.
- **Develop interpretive/resource materials for classroom use.**
This does not mean developing lesson plans and curricula, as many partner sites do this already. However, educators have expressed a need for trails-wide interpretive resource materials that would supplement and provide context for specific site-related activities. Through this effort teachers also could learn how to get copies of audiovisual programs and other materials for use in the classroom.
- **Develop strategy to help minority and urban audiences (underserved audiences) engage with trails and develop “connections to place.”**
The goal would be to develop ways to help urban audiences find relevance in and connections with the emigrant trails experiences. One model could be the Jim Beckwourth Club in Denver. Another possibility might be to explore having school groups or other audiences “adopt” a trail segment near an urban area, or to participate in events such as trail rides, living history programs, etc. Outreach efforts would focus on culturally diverse audiences (Hispanic, Black, Asian, other).

Years 2-5

- **Strengthen interpretation of experiences of women and children, other ethnic groups, and entrepreneurs on the trails.**
Research may be required to identify and provide resource materials on the perspectives of these experiences.
- **Assist with and promote national historic trail patches with scouting organizations.**

Relationship Building

On-Going Tasks/Projects

- **Build and strengthen relationships with tribes.**
Continue with more government to government consultation and ongoing listening sessions. The purpose is to broaden interpretation to incorporate American Indian perspectives and their story of survival.
- **Continue to nurture relationships with a spectrum of existing partners.**
Continue attending conferences, etc. Consideration also should be given to gathering interpreters and/or education specialists from various sites along a specific trail for meetings/workshops to focus on personal and non-personal interpretive topics. Gatherings such as these also offer opportunities to develop trail-related professional networks among sites and agencies. Consider providing orientation tours of sections of historic trails and sites.
- **Develop stronger relationships with state offices.**
This would involve advancing relationships with state historic preservation offices, state historical societies, state parks, etc. It could include consultations on major trails interpretive projects and plans, and inviting these people to review draft media, etc.
- **Keep up with technological advances in interpretive media and communications.**
Maintain and establish connections with other interpretive media offices (i.e., Harpers Ferry Center), organizations, and groups that specialize in various forms of information technology. This would involve attending training sessions and passing relevant information on to trail partners.

Special Populations

Planning and design teams for future media projects should refer to the new Harpers Ferry Center Accessibility Guidelines at <http://www.nps.gov/hfc/accessibility/index.htm>.

Provisions will be made to accommodate the needs of special populations who visit trail-related sites and facilities. Special populations are identified as those with sight, hearing, learning, and mobility impairments; visitors who do not speak English; and the elderly and young children.

Public Law 90-480, the Architectural Barriers Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 establish standards for physical access. Other regulations, laws, and standards include Sections 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Director's Orders No. 42, and the Accessibility for Visitors with Disabilities in National Park Service Programs, Facilities, and Services. All newly constructed facilities utilizing federal funds, as a matter of course, will be designed for accessibility for physically disabled visitors and employees.

Every effort will be made to provide full access to interpretive media and programs to ensure that people with physical and mental disabilities, as well as people who do not speak or understand English, have access to the same information necessary for a safe and meaningful visits. All new interpretive media should follow the standards for accessibility as described in the NPS, October 2007 Programmatic Accessibility Guidelines for National Park Service Interpretive Media.

Staffing Needs

The following is a five-year staffing plan for NTIR interpretation:

- (1) Chief of Interpretation, GS-12, Santa Fe
- (1) Interpretive Specialist, GS-12, Salt Lake City
- (5) Interpretive Specialists, GS-9/11, combined for Santa Fe and Salt Lake City

These seven positions are identified in the NTIR Organizational Chart (2009-2014), which describes staffing needs required to administer not just the Oregon, California, Mormon Pioneer, and Pony Express national historic trails, but five additional trails also administered by NTIR. The seven positions will overlap in duties to include activities across all nine national historic trails, regardless of being located in Salt Lake City or in Santa Fe. This staffing will be required to implement the recommendations in this LRIP.

Planning Team

In addition to the members of the core planning group listed below, a special thank you is extended to the many trail partners who responded to the questionnaire, and to those who attended the planning workshop held at the 2008 OCTA convention.

Aaron Mahr, Superintendent NTIR
Sharon A. Brown, Chief of Trail Operations, NTIR Santa Fe
Chuck Milliken, Lead Interpretive Specialist, NTIR Salt Lake City
Lee Kreutzer, Cultural Resource Specialist, NTIR Salt Lake City
Kay Threlkeld, GIS Database manager, NTIR Salt Lake City, Retired
Otis Halfmoon, Tribal Liaison, NTIR Santa Fe
Jere Krakow, former Superintendent NTIR, Retired
Paul Lee, Interpretive Planner, Harpers Ferry Center, Retired



Appendices

Appendix A: Representative Trail-Related Visitor Centers and Interpretive Sites

The following is not a comprehensive list of all the trail-related visitor centers and interpretive sites associated with the four trails included in the LRIP. This is a representative list illustrating the extent, distribution, and diversity of partner facilities along these trails.

Bureau of Land Management Back Country Byways:

California Trail Back Country Byway, Nevada
 Fort Churchill to Wellington Back Country Byway, Nevada
 Pony Express National Trail Back Country Byway, Utah

Bureau of Land Management Visitor Centers:

California National Historic Trail Interpretive Center, Elko, Nevada
 National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center, Baker City, Oregon
 National Historic Trails Interpretive Center, Casper, Wyoming

National Park Service Units:

City of Rocks National Reserve, Idaho
 Craters of the Moon National Preserve, Idaho
 Fort Laramie National Historic Site, Wyoming
 Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, Washington
 Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument, Idaho
 Lassen Volcanic National Park, California
 McLoughlin House (unit of Fort Vancouver NHS), Oregon
 Scotts Bluff National Monument, Nebraska
 Whitman Mission National Historic Site, Washington

State Parks:

Ash Hollow State Historical Site, Nebraska
 B.F. Hastings Building, California (Pony Express Terminus)
 Camp Floyd/Stagecoach Inn State Park, Utah
 Chimney Rock National Historic Site, Nebraska
 Donner Memorial State Park, California
 Farewell Bend State Park, Oregon
 Fort Bridger State Historic Site, Wyoming
 Fort Churchill State Historic Park, Nevada
 Fort Kearny State Historical Site, Nebraska
 Guernsey State Park, Wyoming
 Hollenberg Pony Express Station State Historic Site, Kansas
 Independence Rock State Historic Site, Wyoming
 Massacre Rocks State Park, Idaho
 Mormon Station State Historic Park, Genoa, Nevada
 Rock Creek Station State Historical Park, Nebraska
 Sutter's Fort State Historic Park, California
 Three Island Crossing State Park, Idaho

State and Other Interpretive Sites, Museums, and Visitor Centers:

Alcove Spring Preserve, Blue Rapids, Kansas
 The Applegate Trail Interpretive Center, Sunny Valley, Oregon
 Bannock County Historical Museum, Pocatello, Idaho
 Bear River State Park Information Center, Evanston, Wyoming
 Bentonsport National Historic District, Bentonsport, Iowa
 Carson Valley Museum and Cultural Center, Gardnerville, Nevada
 Carthage Jail and Visitor Center, Carthage, Illinois
 Church History Museum, Salt Lake City, Utah
 Churchill County Museum, Fallon, Nevada
 Clarke County Historical Museum, Osceola, Iowa
 Dawson County Historical Museum, Lexington, Nebraska
 Fort Boise Replica Site, Parma, Idaho
 Fort Caspar Museum, Casper, Wyoming
 Fort Douglas National Historic Landmark, Salt Lake City, Utah
 Fort Hall Replica Museum, Pocatello, Idaho
 Fort Sedgewick Depot Museum, Julesburg, Colorado
 Genoa Courthouse Museum, Genoa, Nevada
 The Great Platte River Road Archway Monument, Kearney, Nebraska
 Harold Warp Pioneer Village, Minden, Nebraska
 Idaho State Historical Museum, Boise, Idaho
 John Hutchings Museum of Natural History, Lehi, Utah
 Joseph Smith Historic Center, Nauvoo, Illinois
 Kanesville Tabernacle and Visitor Center, Council Bluffs, Iowa
 Kansas Museum of History and Potawatomi Baptist Mission, Topeka, Kansas
 LDS Church History Museum, Salt Lake City, Utah
 LDS Historic Nauvoo Visitors' Center, Nauvoo, Illinois
 Marysville Pony Express Barn, Marysville, Kansas
 Mormon Handcart Historic Site and Visitor Center, Fort Seminoe, Wyoming
 Mormon Trail Center at Historic Winter Quarters, Omaha, Nebraska
 Moses Grinter House and Ferry, Kansas City, Kansas
 National Frontier Trails Museum, Independence, Missouri
 National Oregon/California Trail Center, Montpelier, Idaho
 Native American Heritage Museum, Kansas State Historical Society (Iowa, Sac, and Fox Presbyterian Mission), Highland, Kansas
 Northeastern Nevada Museum, Elko, Nevada
 Nauvoo National Historic Landmark, Nauvoo, Illinois
 Nauvoo State Park and Museum, Nauvoo, Illinois
 North Platte Valley Museum, Gering, Nebraska
 The Old Freighters Museum, Nebraska City, Nebraska
 Oregon Trail Historic Reserve, Boise, Idaho
 Owyhee County Historical Museum, Murphy, Idaho
 Patee House Museum, Saint Joseph, Missouri
 Pony Express Stables Saint Joseph, Missouri
 Pony Express National Museum, Saint Joseph, Missouri
 Prairie Trails Museum, Corydon, Iowa
 Pyramid Lake Scenic Byway Cultural Center, Nixon, Nevada
 Shawnee Indian Mission State Historical Site, Fairway, Kansas
 Shoshone-Bannock Tribal Museum, Fort Hall, Idaho
 Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer, Grand Island, Nebraska
 Sweetwater County Historical Museum, Green River, Wyoming
 This is the Place Heritage Park, Utah
 Tom Sun Ranch, Alcova, Wyoming

Western Historic Trails Center, Council Bluffs, Iowa
Willie Handcart Historic Site, Sweetwater Station Junction, Wyoming
Wyoming Pioneer Memorial Museum, Douglas, Wyoming

US Fish & Wildlife Refuges:

Fish Springs National Wildlife Refuge, Utah
Seedskaadee National Wildlife Refuge, Wyoming



Photo Credit: Wagner Perspective

Great western landscapes, such as Sweetwater Canyon west of Casper, Wyoming, thrilled many pioneers as they advanced westward toward Oregon, California, and Utah.

Appendix B: Decade Goals for the National Trails

The Partnership for the National Trails System has developed a number of initiatives to commemorate “A Decade for the National Trails” which spans the System’s 40th anniversary in 2008 and its 50th anniversary in 2018. Specific goals and objectives have been identified to quicken the pace of developing the National Trails System, both its individual components and the System as a whole. There is a need for more resources, more funding, more volunteers, and more trained staff for non-profits and government agencies. There is also a need for much greater awareness by the public.

Three goals and associated objectives have been articulated. Goals 1 and 2 have direct implications for interpretation and education, and are summarized below.

- **Goal 1: Increase public awareness of the National Trails System and its component trails so that it becomes well known to every citizen and community in the United States.**
 - **Objective A:** Develop and implement educational and interpretive media to increase public appreciation, use, and enjoyment of the National Trails.
 - **Objective B:** Engage all Americans, especially youth, “Baby Boom” retirees, and people from our Nation’s diverse cultures to become stewards of the National Scenic, Historic, and Recreational Trails.
 - **Objective C:** Provide an opportunity for every American and U.S. visitors to explore and enjoy a National Scenic, Historic, Recreation or “rail banked” trail.
- **Goal 2: Complete and enhance the designated National Trails for public appreciation and enjoyment.**
 - **Objective A:** Complete inventories of the natural and cultural resources, route mapping, identification, and signage appropriate for the National Scenic, Historic and Recreational Trails.
 - **Objective B:** Delineate, acquire, and protect gaps in rights-of-way and resource preservation corridors of the National Scenic Trails and preserve unprotected and threatened significant sites and segments along the National Historic Trails.
 - **Objective C:** Delineate preservation corridors to permanently protect the resources and quality of visitor experiences along National Scenic and Historic Trails on public lands and waters.
 - **Objective D:** Complete construction of National Scenic Trails and on-site interpretation along these and National Historic Trails, and where appropriate, restore the setting of significant sites and segments of National Historic Trails to their historic period.



Oregon, California, Mormon Pioneer, and Pony Express National Historic Trails

National Trails Intermountain Region
National Park Service
PO Box 728
Santa Fe, NM 87504
505-988-6098

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Suite 200
Salt Lake City, UT 84111
801-741-1012

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www.nps.gov/oreg

California NHT
www.nps.gov/cali

Mormon Pioneer NHT
www.nps.gov/mopi

Pony Express NHT
www.nps.gov/poex

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HFC Interpretive Planning
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