



# Santa Fe National Historic Trail

## Project Updates - Trail Development, Interpretation, & Public Awareness

### National Register Update

Nominating trail segments and associated cultural resources to the National Register of Historic Places is in full swing in four states along the Santa Fe NHT: New Mexico, Colorado, Kansas, and Missouri. This work is made possible through cooperative agreements between State Historic Preservation Offices and National Trails Intermountain Region (NTIR). The Santa Fe Trail Association has been instrumental in partnering in this effort through identification of eligible properties along the route, as well as by coordination with willing private property owners.

The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the nation's historic places worthy of preservation and leads to awareness of significant resources in a local community. Listing does not place any restrictions on the private property owner.

Through a Connect Trails to Parks grant administered by Fort Union National Monument in New Mexico, NTIR worked with Cornerstones Community Partnerships to enable the survey and preliminary stabilization assessments for four historic properties associated with the Santa Fe Trail in Tiptonville, New Mexico.

### See You at Wagons Ho!

NTIR will be at Bent's Old Fort NHS for the unveiling of new exhibits during *Wagon's Ho!* We will also staff a booth highlighting the work we do and a new Santa Fe Trail Junior Ranger program. Drop by and say hello!



Exhibit design for one of the Kaw Nation's Challenge Cost Share Program funded exhibits.

### What's New? Spring 2012

#### Junior Wagon Master

The association's educational team has finished the planning and design of four age-appropriate activity booklets that cover the entire length of the trail. Youth will earn patches by completing sections of the booklet that relate to trail segments. The first one will be available in June.

#### Sign Projects

Ongoing sign projects for the Santa Fe NHT include plans for the Bent's Fort chapter in Colorado, the Wagonbed Springs chapter in southwest Kansas, and the Missouri River Outfitters chapter in Missouri, with more chapters starting work on their own plans in the near future.

#### Passport Stamps

New Passport To Your National Parks stamps are on their way. This program draws visitors to your sites!

#### Kaw Nation

The Kaw Nation of Oklahoma has developed two exhibits with NTIR. Told from the Kaw perspective, the exhibits will be placed at Kaw Mission State Historic Site and the Santa Fe Trail Center.

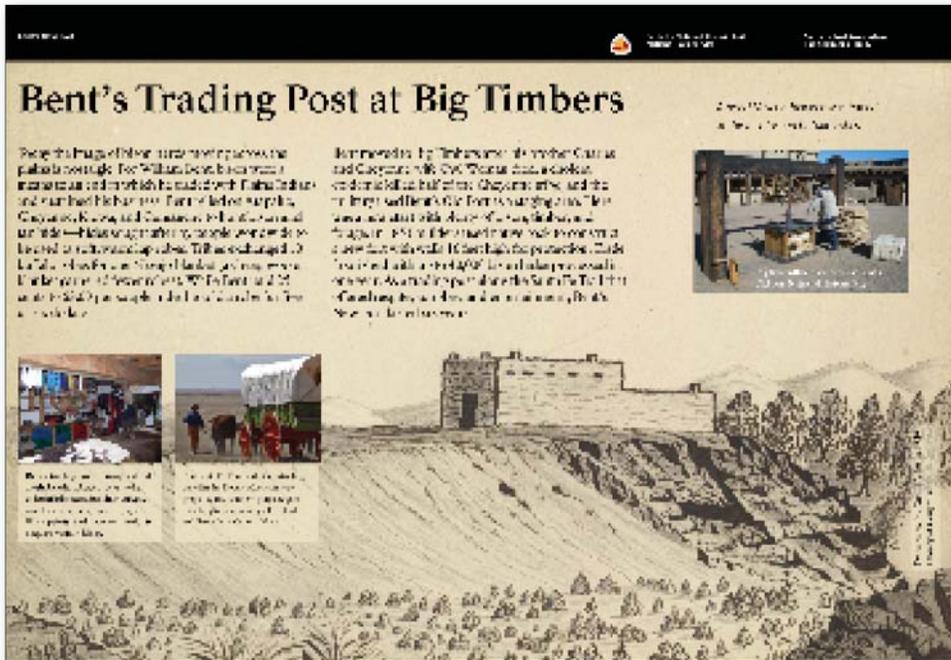
#### Web

Last fall, you saw a preview of the *Santa Fe Trail Train vs. Trail* moving map. It showed the advance of the railroad and the retreat of the trail. Great strides have been made in preparing the presentation for the web. In the meantime, seven videos have been posted under the Photos & Multimedia section of the Santa Fe NHT website: [nps.gov/safe](http://nps.gov/safe)

#### Junior Ranger

The new Junior Ranger program will be field-tested at the *Wagons Ho!* event at Bent's Old Fort NHS.

# Planning for the Visitor Experience: The Bent's New Fort Example



Five Bent's New Fort wayside exhibits and the site plan will be finished by the end of 2012.

Last November, NTIR landscape architects, interpreters, and cultural resource specialists visited Bent's New Fort and worked with the land owner and stakeholders to identify needs and jump start the project. They determined that the overall scope would include an archeological survey, the design of an interpretive experience including wayside exhibits and a loop trail, and planning for parking and directional signage.

## *Site Design: Planning for the Visitor Experience*

A major product of NTIR's site design involvement is a comprehensive Development Concept Plan, which documents long term plans for visitor parking, wayside locations, the interpretive loop trail, directional signing to the site, and other details. This document is not yet complete, but in the meantime some parts of the project are moving forward:

The City of Lamar, Colorado, donated their services for a topographic survey, which NTIR staff are now using to produce designs for a parking area. The site is challenging for parking or walking trails due to steep slopes and areas of exposed bedrock, but appropriate and timely planning allows the overall site design to deal with these conditions.

Directional signing to the site is currently being planned as part of a larger Santa Fe NHT signing plan for southeastern Colorado. An entrance sign has been fabricated and sent to the landowner Brad Semmens who will construct a stone base for it, similar to the ones he will build for the waysides.

Planning for the visitor experience at a trail site is often a collaborative task involving multiple areas of expertise.

Work currently underway at Bent's New Fort provides an example of planning for resource and visitation needs in one project.

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The five wayside exhibits are nearing design completion in-house at NTIR and will soon go out for review. For the loop trail and brochure, Mike Kelly of Northern Arizona University will work with stakeholders to produce NPS-style statements of significance for Bent's New Fort.

## *Resource Needs: Archaeology & National Register*

Before the site and loop trail plans can be completed on the ground, further archaeological survey work is needed to ensure site resources will not be disturbed. Funding for this second archaeological survey has been secured.

Listing on the National Register of Historic Places is being pursued for the site as part of a multiple property Santa Fe Trail nomination. The site has been determined to be of national significance.

## *Site Development, Installation, & Site Opening*

While planning and design are underway, visitors are already traveling to the site! Immediate needs for signage and basic orientation are being addressed while the rest of the visitor experience is still being planned. When finished, Bent's New Fort will be a fully developed trail site with exhibits and an interpretive walking tour with a brochure, while the site remains protected as a result of best practices in planning, and its owner's watchful eye.