

MEMORANDUM

TO: TOM FREEDMAN

FROM: RAVEN MONTGOMERY

RE: SUMMARY OF NATIONAL DISCOVERY TRAIL ACT HAND-OUT

DATE: MAY 27, 1997

American Discovery Trail

Wmgs. 6/16/97

-American Discovery Trail-

-study taken whose purpose was to provide information to Congress to determine if it is feasible to add the ADT to the national trails system

-study outlined three possible options for the ADT:

1. Would authorize the ADT as a national scenic trail, with a provision that permits the inclusion of existing trail segments where motorized recreational use is currently allowed

-federal government would have the lead in overseeing the planning and management of the trail, with state and local governments and private nonprofit groups serving as partners

-alternative would be possible if Congress amended the National Trails System Act to authorize the ADT as a national scenic trail, and provided a waiver to except the trail from the national scenic trail nonmotorized use requirement, agreed to a certification process, and provided funding for administering the trail

Problems:

-ADT would not meet the trail use criterion because motorized recreational

use is permitted on some trails the ADT would follow, and because much of the ADT currently follows roads

2. Would authorize the ADT as a national discovery trail.

-Congress would have to amend the National Trails System Act to include national discovery trails as a fifth class of national trails.

-a nonprofit group would have the lead role in administering the trail

-alternative would be feasible if Congress amended the National Trails System Act and created the new trail designation, authorized the ADT, and provided funding for administering the trail

3. ADT would be a nationwide trail, but Congress would not authorize it as a national trail

-trail would be administered, developed, and promoted by a nonprofit group

- alternative would be feasible from the federal government's perspective, but not the nonprofit group's perspective
- the overall impacts to natural and cultural resources would be negligible under all of the alternatives, assuming the ADT followed existing trails and several general mitigation measures are observed

National Perspective

- trail would have an insignificant effect on the economy and on residents living near trail corridor

National Recreation Trails

- national recreation trails are designated by the secretary of agriculture and are managed by public and private agencies at the local, state, and national levels
- Congressional action is not required to designate a national recreation trail

National Historic Trails

- congressionally authorized routes that recognize prominent past routes of exploration, trade, migration, and military action
- purpose is to identify, interpret, and protect nationally significant historic routes and their remnants and artifacts for public use and enjoyment

National Scenic Trails

- administered by federal agency

Connecting and Side Trails

- congressional action is not required to designate these trails

Evolution of the ADT Proposal

- volunteer committees, composed of trails activists, public officials, and interested citizens were established in each of the states that the trail would pass through
- these various groups planned the route through their states
- many of the ADT routes were located on public roads rights-of-way to avoid conflicts with private lands and to also avoid the need for acquisition of land for trail rights-of-way

The Role of the National Park Service

-Core Study Group-

- familiarized themselves with area, potential problems and opportunities in the ADT corridor
- identified reasonable alternative concepts for different national trail designations and possible ways to administer the trail
- sought views of the public
 - used newsletters, telephone calls and meetings

- Local trail groups, the ADT volunteer state committee, and the American Hiking Society are taking action to establish the trail

Purposes of ADT:

- Provide a continuous coast-to-coast route for nonmotorized users
- Establish a marked route connecting representative examples of America's

heritage

- Serve as an east-to-west spine, linking many major trails and strengthening the national network of trails
- Enable trail users to experience the spectrum of American landscapes, from urban to rural to back country to wildlands
- Create opportunities for people to meet, communicate with, and appreciate others from around America and the world

-study suggests that any legislation relative to the ADT should recognize these purposes as a guide for future management

Bill Tracking Report HR 588
Bill Tracking Report
105th Congress
1st Session
U. S. House of Representatives
HR 588
1997 Bill Tracking H.R. 588; 105 Bill Tracking H.R. 588

NATIONAL DISCOVERY TRAILS ACT OF 1997

DATE-INTRO: February 5, 1997

LAST-ACTION-DATE: February 27, 1997

STATUS: Referred to committee

SPONSOR: Representative Douglas K. Bereuter R-NE

TOTAL-COSPONSORS: 45 Cosponsors: 28 Democrats / 17 Republicans

SYNOPSIS: A bill to amend the National Trails System Act to create a new category of long-distance trails to be known as national discovery trails, to authorize the American Discovery Trail as the first trail in that category, and for other purposes.

ACTIONS: Committee Referrals:

02/05/97 House Resources Committee

Legislative Chronology:

1st Session Activity:

02/05/97 143 Cong Rec H 345 Referred to the House Resources Committee

02/12/97 143 Cong Rec H 524 Cosponsor(s) added

02/27/97 143 Cong Rec H 702 Cosponsor(s) added

BILL-DIGEST: (from the CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE)

Short title as introduced :

National Discovery Trails Act of 1997

CO-SPONSORS: Original Cosponsors:

Barrett R-NE	Boehlert R-NY	Bunning R-KY
Castle R-DE	Costello D-IL	Davis D-IL
Ehlers R-MI	Evans D-IL	Faleomavaega D-AS
Fawell R-IL	Fazio D-CA	Frost D-TX
Hamilton D-IN	Hastings D-FL	Hefley R-CO
Hinchey D-NY	Kelly R-NY	Leach R-IA
Lipinski D-IL	McIntosh R-IN	Miller D-CA
Mollohan D-WV	Moran D-VA	Morella R-MD
Norton D-DC	Pelosi D-CA	Pickett D-VA
Poshard D-IL	Rahall D-WV	Schaefer R-CO
Skaggs D-CO	Stark D-CA	Tauscher D-CA

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05/23/97 1:57 PM
Author: Destry Jarvis at NP-NPS

Date: 5/23/97 1:57 PM

Priority: Normal

TO: Nat Wood

Subject: Re: White House question on Natl. Discovery Trail Act

----- Message Contents -----

Nat, it's a great concept, and we are on record supporting it. There are a few subtle differences between the NPs position and that of the Forest Service and that of the American Hiking Society, which is the major NGO which conceived the idea, scouted the route, etc.

The disagreements boil down to whether ADT should be done under the authority of the National Trails system Act, or as stand along authority; whethere it should be a new categoty within the NTSA, or done as a national Scenic Trail. Rep. Hanson, Young, etc, want a stand alone authority, so as to further limit the federal role from that under the NTSA, and to preclude land acquisition; Forest Service wants it as a national scenic trail, which NPS opposes, which boils down to a disagreement over access to the trail by motorized vehicles, which FS wants and we don't (except on those portions of the ADT which are on existing roads.)

The disagreements, though, are a relatively minor side show, and should in no way interfere with getting on with it. NPS has a draft bill which has not cleared OMB, reflecting the differences, while AHS has already gotten their version introduced.

Destry

05/10/1997 10:11
Author: Destry Jarvis at NP-NPS

Date: 5/23/97 1:57 PM

Priority: Normal

TO: Nat Wood

Subject: Re: White House question on Natl. Discovery Trail Act

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Destry



IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

P.O. Box 57127

Washington, D.C. 20015-7127

FAX TRANSMISSION SHEET

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

DATE

6/9

TO:

Tom Friedman

FAX NUMBER:

FROM:

Nat Wood

SUBJECT:

ADT testimony & bill

NUMBER OF PAGES:

19

(including cover)

REMARKS:

Will send a short Underground RR.
summary tomorrow.

If there is a problem, please call (202)208-4621.

STATEMENT OF KATHERINE H. STEVENSON, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, CULTURAL RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP AND PARTNERSHIPS, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS AND PUBLIC LANDS OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON RESOURCES, ON H.R. 588, THE NATIONAL DISCOVERY TRAILS ACT OF 1997.

JUNE 10, 1997

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to appear before this committee to present the Department's views on H.R. 588, the National Discovery Trails Act of 1997.

We support enactment of H.R. 588 if amended according to our testimony. We strongly support the concept of the American Discovery Trail and believe that the best way to integrate it into the existing National Trails System is through carefully establishing a new category of national discovery long-distance trails.

The American Discovery Trail (ADT) was proposed in 1990 as a continuous mid-continent, coast-to-coast trail to link metropolitan areas to the Nation's major long-distance trails, as well as to shorter local and regional trails. It was envisioned by its founders as a strong backbone for America's National Trails System.

In October 1992, through P.L. 102-461, Congress directed the Secretary of the Interior to study the feasibility and desirability of adding the ADT to the National Trails System. This study was completed in December, 1995, and submitted to Congress last year. The ADT route, as described in this legislation and mapped in the feasibility study, extends for over 6,000 miles from Cape Henlopen

State Park in Delaware to Point Reyes National Seashore in California, crossing the states of Nevada, Utah, Colorado, Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, a bit of Kentucky, West Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia.

The feasibility study team visited many parts of the Trail's route, analyzed its purposes and goals as a stand-alone project and as an integral part of the National Trails System. They developed the following three alternatives based on their findings:

Alternative 1 examined the ADT as a potential national scenic trail.

Alternative 2 recognized the unique characteristics of this trail and suggested a new category of trail within the National Trails System.

Alternative 3 explored taking no Federal action.

H.R. 588 is based on Alternative 2, a new category of long-distance trail.

We believe that the National Trails System can be improved by adding this new category, which links America's cities together, is open to a variety of trail users (as determined by local conditions), and relies on a relationship of equals between the Federal Government and a nonprofit partner. However, such trails

must be limited to those that meet specific requirements and are of national interest and significance.

If created as proposed in this legislation, the ADT, as well as the new category of national discovery trails, will further the goals of the National Trails System in several significant ways -- ways which help update the System to reflect current popular and political realities. The ADT will:

- 1) link America's long-distance trails to a variety of cities and towns, thereby providing population centers direct access to our Nation's remarkable trails system;
- 2) welcome into the National Trails System a new category of trails for which the primary responsibility for protecting and maintaining these trails lies not with the Federal Government, but with others;
- 3) be built largely upon existing trails and trail systems, thereby eliminating the need for Federal acquisition; and
- 4) require that an effective private-sector partner is present from the start, rather than following designation. It is our experience that trails created without such partners tend to flounder and do not serve the public well. In this case, the nonprofit partner would shoulder much of the coordination and certification responsibility, which in the past, has fallen to

the Federal Government in caring for long-distance trails created under the National Trails System Act.

The importance of a strong partner. The Appalachian Trail was the model and impetus for the National Trails System. When that trail was established as a national scenic trail in 1968, it was well-supported by a vibrant nonprofit organization, the Appalachian Trail Conference, with thousands of members and decades of trail-building and maintaining experience. For the National Park Service, helping protect and administer the Appalachian Trail from the beginning has been a mutual partnership, with both the Conference and the Service offering their skills and strengths to keep the trail viable and intact.

However, some of the trails subsequently established as part of the National Trails System have not had (and still do not have) strong partner organizations. In some cases, the federal agency administering a trail has had to wait for such a group to get started or to assist in organizing it. Trail partnerships are essential to the well-being of the National Trails System. We strongly support the amendment to the National Trails System Act in H.R. 588, which insists that one of the criteria for establishing a national discovery trail is that there already exist a competent organization for the proposed trail, backed up by State and local public support.

Trail protection. By far the most controversial issue associated with the National Trails System is trail corridor protection and, specifically, Federal land acquisition. The organizers of the ADT recognized this early on and routed this Trail to minimize its impact on private lands. It is our understanding that there are only a handful of private parcels crossed by the Trail, and these occur where an underlying trail already exists, such as the Buckeye Trail in Ohio. The feasibility study team felt strongly that local and State jurisdictions should bear the primary responsibility for protecting and enhancing the ADT and its corridor on both sides. The Federal Government should only be a facilitator and agent of last resort.

Trail costs: The National Park Service today administers 15 of the Nation's 20 national scenic and historic trails. They range in length from 300 to 5,600 miles. Operating costs range from \$25,000 to over \$720,000 per year. Because of its length and complexity, costs for the ADT will fall somewhere in the middle of this range. The feasibility study team estimated the Trail's comprehensive management plan would cost approximately \$360,000 over several years, and that annual Federal operating costs of the Trail as a national discovery trail will be about \$400,000 a year. There should be no land acquisition or protection costs for the Federal Government, since primary responsibility for trail corridor protection lies with State, local, and nonprofit partners. It should be noted that authority already exists within the National

Trails System Act to appropriate any necessary funds to support this Trail, or other trails created as national discovery trails. Funding for this addition to the National Trails System is not currently assumed in outyear budget estimates. Establishment of this new trail, even if authorized by Congress, would be contingent on Administration priorities and available resources.

Amendments. We suggest the following amendments to H.R. 588:

1. On page 2, line 21 strike "Section 5" and insert "Section 5(b)".
2. On page 2, line 23 strike "subsection" and insert "paragraph".
3. On page 2, line 24 strike "(g)(1)" and insert "(12)".

Amendments 1-3 would keep the entire discussion of trail feasibility in the same section of the National Trails System Act.

4. On page 3, at the end of line 19 add "Where national discovery trails are congruent with other local, state, national scenic, or national historic trails, the designation of the discovery trail shall not in any way

diminish the values and significance for which those trails were established."

This amendment would ensure that discovery trails have the same significance as other trails in the system.

5. On page 4, line 3 strike "and" and add "(3) by redesignating the paragraph relating to the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail as paragraph (20)".
6. On page 4, line 3 strike "(3)" and insert "(4)".
7. On page 4, line 5 strike "(20)" and insert "(21)".

Amendments 5-7 are necessary since the establishment of the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail in the 104th Congress, which is numbered 20.

8. On page 5, line 1 strike the remainder of the sentence and insert "managed by a competent trailwide nonprofit organization in close cooperation with the appropriate Secretary and other affected land managing agencies and trails organizations."

This amendment will clarify the relationship of the nonprofit trail partner to the Federal Government.

9. On page 5, line 8 strike "sections 7(e), 7(f), and" and insert "subsection".

The NPS believes national discovery trails should not be exempt from subsections 7(e) and 7(f) of the National Trails System Act. An exemption from subsections 7(e) and 7(f) may unduly restrict Federal activity needed to protect this Trail. Subsection 7(e) authorizes acceptance of donations and collaboration through cooperative agreements, and 7(f) authorizes land exchanges to protect national trails.

10. On page 5, line 13 strike "(h)" and insert "(g)".

This is a technical amendment.

11. On page 6, lines 10 and 11 strike "of the trail and a plan for its implementation" and insert "for critical segments of the trail and a plan for their implementation where appropriate."

We suggest this amendment because the reference to "identified carrying capacity" creates a difficult requirement which has been almost impossible to address in other trail plans.

Mr. Chairman, we support designation of the ADT as the first of a new category of national discovery trails. We believe it is innovative and worthy of designation with the amendments suggested. The feasibility study has shown that people across the Nation are clearly enthusiastic about this effort. The American Discovery

Trail and future discovery trails will link America's towns and cities, creating a true National Trails System.

This concludes my prepared remarks. I will be glad to answer any questions you may have.

I

105TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 588

To amend the National Trails System Act to create a new category of long-distance trails to be known as national discovery trails, to authorize the American Discovery Trail as the first trail in that category, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 5, 1997

Mr. BEREUTER (for himself, Mr. CASTLE, Mr. COSTELLO, Mrs. KELLY, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. HAMILTON, Mr. PICKETT, Mr. MCINTOSH, Mr. BUNNING, Mr. EVANS, Mr. DAN SCHAEFER of Colorado, Mr. HEFLEY, Mr. FROST, Mr. MOLLOHAN, Ms. WOOLSEY, Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA, Mr. MILLER of California, Ms. NORTON, Mr. SKAGGS, Mr. POSHARD, Mr. FAZIO of California, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. STARK, Mr. BARRETT of Nebraska, Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. VENTO, Mr. EHLERS, Mr. WELLER, Mr. BOENLERT, Mr. FAWELL, Mr. LEACH, Mrs. TAUSCHER, Ms. PELOSI, Mrs. MORELLA, Mr. RAHALL, and Mr. HINCHIEY) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Resources

A BILL

To amend the National Trails System Act to create a new category of long-distance trails to be known as national discovery trails, to authorize the American Discovery Trail as the first trail in that category, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

2

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the "National Discovery
3 Trails Act of 1997".

4 **SEC. 2. NATIONAL TRAILS SYSTEM ACT AMENDMENTS.**

5 (a) NATIONAL DISCOVERY TRAILS ESTABLISHED.—

6 (1) IN GENERAL.—Section 3(a) of the National
7 Trails System Act (16 U.S.C. 1242(a)) is amended
8 by inserting after paragraph (4) the following:

9 “(5) National discovery trails, established as
10 provided in section 5, which will be extended, contin-
11 uous, interstate trails so located as to provide for
12 outstanding outdoor recreation and travel and to
13 connect representative examples of America’s trails
14 and communities. National discovery trails should
15 provide for the conservation and enjoyment of sig-
16 nificant natural, cultural, and historic resources as-
17 sociated with each trail and should be so located as
18 to represent metropolitan, urban, rural, and
19 backcountry regions of the Nation.”.

20 (2) FEASIBILITY REQUIREMENTS; COOPERATIVE
21 MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENT.—Section 5 of such
22 Act (16 U.S.C. 1244) is amended by adding at the
23 end the following new subsection:

24 “(g)(1) For purposes of subsection (b), a trail shall
25 not be considered feasible and desirable for designation

1 as a national discovery trail unless it meets all of the fol-
2 lowing criteria:

3 “(A) The trail must link to one or more areas
4 within the boundaries of a metropolitan area (as
5 those boundaries are determined under section
6 134(c) of title 23, United States Code). It should
7 also join with other trails, tying the National Trails
8 System to significant recreation and resources areas.

9 “(B) It must be supported by a competent
10 trailwide nonprofit organization. Each trail should
11 have extensive local and trailwide support by the
12 public, by user groups, and by affected State and
13 local governments.

14 “(C) It must be extended and pass through
15 more than one State. At a minimum, it should be a
16 continuous, walkable route.

17 “(2) The appropriate Secretary for each national dis-
18 covery trail shall administer the trail in cooperation with
19 a competent trailwide nonprofit organization.”.

20 (b) DESIGNATION OF THE AMERICAN DISCOVERY
21 TRAIL AS A NATIONAL DISCOVERY TRAIL.—Section 5(a)
22 of such Act (16 U.S.C. 1244(a)) is amended—

23 (1) by redesignating the paragraph relating to
24 the California National Historic Trail as paragraph
25 (18);

4

1 (2) by redesignating the paragraph relating to
2 the Pony Express National Historic Trail as para-
3 graph (19); and

4 (3) by adding at the end the following:

5 “(20) The American Discovery Trail, a trail of
6 approximately 6,000 miles extending from Cape
7 Henlopen State Park in Delaware to Point Reyes
8 National Seashore in California, extending westward
9 through Delaware, Maryland, the District of Colum-
10 bia, West Virginia, Ohio, and Kentucky, where near
11 Cincinnati it splits into two routes. The Northern
12 Midwest route traverses Ohio, Indiana, Illinois,
13 Iowa, Nebraska, and Colorado, and the Southern
14 Midwest route traverses Indiana, Illinois, Missouri,
15 Kansas, and Colorado. After the two routes rejoin in
16 Denver, Colorado, the route continues through Colo-
17 rado, Utah, Nevada, and California. The trail is gen-
18 erally described in Volume 2 of the National Park
19 Service feasibility study dated June 1995 which
20 shall be on file and available for public inspection in
21 the office of the Director of the National Park Serv-
22 ice, Department of the Interior, the District of
23 Columbia. The American Discovery Trail shall be

1 administered by the Secretary of the Interior in co-
2 operation with a competent trailwide nonprofit orga-
3 nization and other affected land managing agencies.
4 No lands or interests outside the exterior boundaries
5 of federally administered areas may be acquired by
6 the Federal Government solely for the American
7 Discovery Trail. This trail is specifically exempted
8 from the provisions of sections 7(e), 7(f), and 7(g).”.

9 (c) COMPREHENSIVE NATIONAL DISCOVERY TRAIL
10 PLAN.—Section 5 of such Act (16 U.S.C. 1244) is further
11 amended by adding at the end the following new sub-
12 section:

13 “(h) Within three complete fiscal years after the date
14 of enactment of any law designating a national discovery
15 trail, the administering Federal agency shall enter into ar-
16 rangements with a competent trailwide nonprofit organi-
17 zation to submit a comprehensive plan for the protection,
18 management, development, and use of the trail, to the
19 Committee on Resources of the United States House of
20 Representatives and the Committee on Energy and Natu-
21 ral Resources of the United States Senate. The Secretary
22 shall ensure that the comprehensive plan does not conflict
23 with any existing agency direction and that the nonprofit
24 organization consults with affected land managing agen-
25 cies, the Governors of the affected States, county and local

1 political jurisdictions, and local organizations maintaining
2 components of the trail. Mandatory components of the
3 comprehensive plan include—

4 “(1) specific objectives and practices to be ob-
5 served in the administration and management of the
6 trail, including the identification of all significant
7 natural, historical, and cultural resources to be pre-
8 served, model agreements necessary for joint trail
9 administration among and between interested par-
10 ties, and an identified carrying capacity of the trail
11 and a plan for its implementation;

12 “(2) a trail protection plan to preserve the val-
13 ues for which the trail is being established and rec-
14 ognized by the Federal Government;

15 “(3) general and site-specific development plans
16 including anticipated costs; and

17 “(4) the process to be followed by the nonprofit
18 organization, in cooperation with the appropriate
19 Secretary, to implement the trail marking authori-
20 ties in section 7(c) conforming to approved trail logo
21 or emblem requirements.”.

22 **SEC. 3. CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.**

23 The National Trails System Act is amended—

1 (1) in section 2(b) (16 U.S.C. 1241(b)), by
2 striking "seenic and historic" and inserting "seenic,
3 historic, and discovery";

4 (2) in the section heading to section 5 (16
5 U.S.C. 1244), by striking "**AND NATIONAL HIS-**
6 **TORIC**" and inserting "**, NATIONAL HISTORIC,**
7 **AND NATIONAL DISCOVERY**";

8 (3) in section 5(a) (16 U.S.C. 1244(a)), in the
9 matter preceding paragraph (1)—

10 (A) by striking "and national historic" and
11 inserting ", national historic, and national dis-
12 covery"; and

13 (B) by striking "and National Historic"
14 and inserting ", National Historic, and Na-
15 tional Discovery";

16 (4) in section 5(b) (16 U.S.C. 1244(b)), in the
17 matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking "or na-
18 tional historic" and inserting ", national historic, or
19 national discovery";

20 (5) in section 5(b)(3) (16 U.S.C. 1244(b)(3)),
21 by striking "or national historic" and inserting
22 ", national historic, or national discovery";

23 (6) in section 7(a)(2) (16 U.S.C. 1246(a)(2)),
24 by striking "and national historic" and inserting
25 ", national historic, and national discovery";

1 (7) in section 7(b) (16 U.S.C. 1246(b)), by
2 striking "or national historic" each place such term
3 appears and inserting ", national historic, or na-
4 tional discovery";

5 (8) in section 7(c) (16 U.S.C. 1246(c))—

6 (A) by striking "scenic or national his-
7 toric" each place it appears and inserting "sce-
8 nic, national historic, or national discovery";

9 (B) in the second proviso, by striking "sce-
10 nic, or national historic" and inserting "scenic,
11 national historic, or national discovery"; and

12 (C) by striking ", and national historic"
13 and inserting ", national historic, and national
14 discovery";

15 (9) in section 7(d) (16 U.S.C. 1246(d)), by
16 striking "or national historic" and inserting "na-
17 tional historic, or national discovery";

18 (10) in section 7(c) (16 U.S.C. 1246(c)), by
19 striking "or national historic" each place such term
20 appears and inserting ", national historic, or na-
21 tional discovery";

22 (11) in section 7(f)(2) (16 U.S.C. 1246(f)(2)),
23 by striking "National Scenic or Historic" and insert-
24 ing "national scenic, historic, or discovery trail";

9

- 1 (12) in section 7(h)(1) (16 U.S.C. 1246(h)(1)),
2 by striking "or national historic" and inserting "na-
3 tional historic, or national discovery"; and
4 (13) in section 7(i) (16 U.S.C. 1246(i)), by
5 striking "or national historic" and inserting "na-
6 tional historic, or national discovery".

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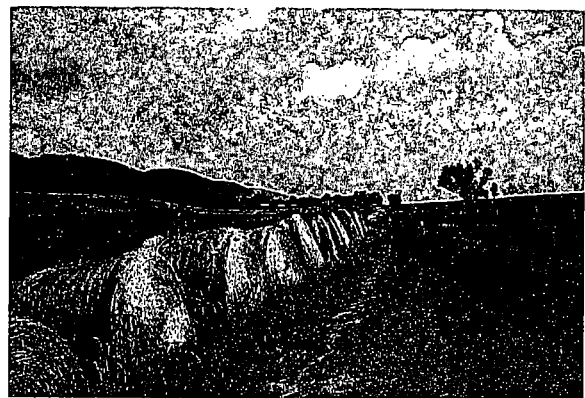
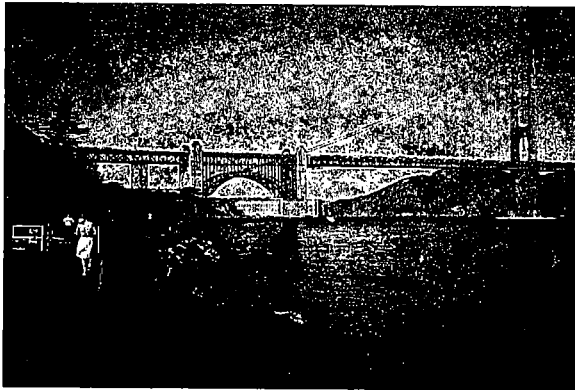
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American Discovery Trail

Draft Volume 1: National Trail Feasibility Study
Environmental Assessment



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National Trail Feasibility Study
Volume 1: Environmental Assessment

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AMERICAN DISCOVERY TRAIL

SUMMARY

The American Discovery Trail (ADT) was proposed by the American Hiking Society and *Backpacker* magazine as a continuous, coast-to-coast trail to link the nation's principal north-south trails and shorter local and regional trails into a nationwide network. The purpose of this study is to provide information to Congress to determine if it is feasible and desirable to add the ADT to the national trails system. The study team identified three possible options for the ADT.

Alternative 1 would authorize the ADT as a national scenic trail, with a provision that would permit the inclusion of existing trail segments where motorized recreational use is currently allowed. The federal government would have the lead in overseeing the planning and management of the trail, with state and local governments and private nonprofit groups serving as partners. Although the ADT would meet the significance, length, and accessibility criteria for national scenic trail authorization, it clearly does not meet the trail use criterion because motorized recreational use is permitted on some trails the ADT would follow, and because much of the ADT currently follows roads. There are also conflicting views on whether it would be desirable to authorize the ADT as a national scenic trail. This alternative would be feasible if Congress amended the National Trails System Act to authorize the ADT as a national scenic trail and provided a waiver to except the trail from the national scenic trail nonmotorized use requirement, agreed to a certification process, and provided funding for administering the trail.

Alternative 2 would authorize the ADT as a national discovery trail. Under this alternative, Congress would need to amend the National Trails System Act to include national discovery trails as a fifth class of national trails. A nonprofit group would have the lead role in administering the trail. The

study team found that the ADT would meet four of the proposed criteria for authorization as a national discovery trail. Alternative 2 would be feasible if Congress amended the National Trails System Act and created the new trail designation, authorized the ADT, and provided funding for administering the trail.

Alternative 3, the "no federal government action" option, was analyzed to meet the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act. Under alternative 3 the ADT would be a nationwide trail, but Congress would not authorize it as a national trail. The trail would continue to be administered, developed, and promoted by a nonprofit group such as the American Hiking Society. This alternative would be feasible from the federal government's perspective; however, the feasibility of the alternative is questionable from the nonprofit group's perspective. The study team also found conflicting views on whether this alternative would be desirable to implement.

The overall impacts to natural and cultural resources would be negligible under all of the alternatives, assuming the ADT followed existing trails and several general mitigation measures are observed. From a national perspective, the trail would have an insignificant effect on the economy and on residents living near the trail corridor. No changes in land use or private lands would be expected as a result of the authorization of the ADT. The three alternatives would vary on the effect they would have on the federal land management agencies' management and administration of the trail.

This study has been printed in two volumes. Volume 1 contains the *National Trail Feasibility Study and Environmental Assessment*; volume 2 contains descriptions and maps of the trail corridor.

BACKGROUND

The National Trails System

Recognizing the value and need for trails, Congress passed the National Trails System Act (PL 90-543) in 1968. This legislation established a national system of recreation, historic, scenic, and connecting or side trails.

National recreation trails are existing trails recognized by the federal government as contributing to the national trails system. They provide a variety of outdoor recreation uses and vary in length and accessibility. National recreation trails are designated by the secretary of the interior or the secretary of agriculture and are managed by public and private agencies at the local, state, and national levels. Congressional action is not required to designate a national recreation trail.

National historic trails are congressionally authorized routes, including motorized transportation routes, that recognize prominent past routes of exploration, trade, migration, and military action. These trails, which are administered by a federal agency, generally consist of remnant sites and trail segments rather than continuous trails. Their purpose is to identify, interpret, and protect nationally significant historic routes and their remnants and artifacts for public use and enjoyment.

National scenic trails are congressionally authorized long-distance, usually continuous, routes that are designed for hiking and other compatible nonmotorized uses (e.g., horseback riding, bicycling, cross-country skiing). These trails, which are administered by a federal agency, have high recreational values and pass through areas with nationally significant scenic, natural, historical, or cultural qualities. National scenic trails should be capable of attracting visitors from throughout the country. They avoid motor roads, mining areas, power trans-

mission lines, and commercial and industrial developments that are incompatible with protecting the trails' natural condition and that detract from the recreational experience.

In general, national scenic trails have six purposes:

- Provide a continuous, long-distance, offroad route for nonmotorized recreational uses.
- Increase trail recreational opportunities for all people.
- Provide access to outstanding examples of America's natural heritage.
- Stimulate the conservation of nationally important scenic, historic, natural, and cultural areas associated with the trail corridor.
- Stimulate increased federal, state, local, grassroots, commercial, non-profit, and industry trail activity and partnership.
- Heighten awareness, participation, stewardship, and support for trails.

Connecting and side trails are components of national recreation, scenic, and historic trails. They provide additional points of public access to or between the above trails. Congressional action is not required to designate these trails.

Today, the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, and Bureau of Land Management administer 19 congressionally designated national scenic and historic trails. When completed, these trails will stretch over 37,000 miles in 45 states. In addition, there are over 800 recognized national recreation trails, which are administered by local, state and federal agencies and private organizations.

Evolution of the ADT Proposal

The American Discovery Trail started as a joint project of the American Hiking Society and the publisher of *Backpacker* magazine. The idea owes its beginnings to a 1980-1981 transcontinental hike called "HikaNation," in which members of the American Hiking Society spent 411 days walking from California to Delaware. The event was intended to draw attention to the need for more trails and the poor condition of existing trails. The two groups later concluded there was a need to establish a permanent coast-to-coast route across the country. The ADT was conceived as being the "backbone" of the national trail system, linking most of the country's major north-south long-distance trails, along with numerous regional and state trails. While primarily a hiking trail, the idea was that many parts of the ADT would be shared with bicyclists and equestrians. The creators envisioned the ADT as

a trail of discovery — a true "slice of Americana." Seeing the country on foot on trails or by bicycle on quiet roads, the adventurer will come to know the land and its people in a way not possible from a highway. The ADT will be a "Route 66 for the self-propelled."

The trail was further seen as helping meet the increasing demand for trails in cities and rural areas, and providing an opportunity for Americans living in major metropolitan areas to use the national trails system. It would connect urban areas to rural areas. Finally, the ADT creators saw the concept as a way to increase public interest in trails and trail organizations across the country.

After raising funds from corporate sponsors, an ADT field crew and coordinator were selected in the spring of 1990 to identify a route for the trail. Volunteer committees, composed of trails activists, public officials, and interested citizens, were established in each of the states the trail would pass

through. The committees, working with local, state, and federal land management agencies and local trail and outdoor groups, planned the route through their states. The state committees were directed to route the trail on public lands to avoid conflicts with private lands and to avoid the need for acquisition of land for trail rights-of-way. As a result, much of the ADT route was located on public road rights-of-way.

Between June 2, 1990, and July 30, 1991, the ADT field crew scouted the state committees' route from Point Reyes National Seashore, California, to Cape Henlopen State Park, Delaware. The team walked or biked a total of 4,835 miles over the course of 14 months. Detailed notes were taken to document the route and describe the country the trail traverses.

Even before the scouting team had finished its coast-to-coast trek, the American Hiking Society was working with Congress to officially designate the trail as part of the national trails system. In the summer of 1991 legislation was introduced to study the ADT for designation as a national trail. Congress eventually passed the legislation, which was signed by President Bush on October 23, 1992. In addition to the alignment scouted by the ADT field crew, Congress directed that a northern loop through northeast Colorado, Nebraska, Iowa, Illinois, and Indiana be studied. The American Discovery Trail map shows the general route of the ADT as currently proposed.

The Role of the National Park Service

The National Trails System Act (PL 90-543), as amended by PL 102-461, directed the secretary of the interior to study the feasibility and desirability of designating the ADT as a national trail. The National Park Service was assigned responsibility for preparing the study. A core study team was assembled in the summer of 1993, consisting of a program manager, team leader, two outdoor



recreation planners, landscape architect, and cultural resource and natural resource specialists.

Several other federal agency representatives worked with the Park Service core study team. This interagency group consisted of the five involved Park Service regions (i.e., Western, Rocky Mountain, Midwest, Mid-Atlantic, and National Capital regions), the Park Service's Washington, D.C. office, U.S. Forest Service, and Bureau of Land Management. Two representatives from the American Hiking Society also worked with the Park Service. The interagency group was actively involved in the preparation of the study, contributing information about the trail, refining trail purposes, identifying issues, concerns, and desired future conditions for the trail, formulating alternative concepts for the trail, and providing other assistance to the core study team as needed.

The ADT Planning Process

The study team's first step in the planning process for the trail was gathering and analyzing information. Key assumptions, problems, issues, and concerns for the trail were identified, information was collected on noteworthy natural and cultural resources within the trail corridor, and other data was gathered to determine the trail's purposes, significance, feasibility, and desirability of including the ADT in the national trails system.

From October 1993 through June 1994, members of the study team traveled across the country to become familiar first-hand with the resources, experiences, and potential problems and opportunities in the ADT corridor. Because the team members could not see all aspects of the proposed trail route, they contacted people who were either

knowledgeable about the trail or somehow affected by it

The next major step was to identify reasonable alternative concepts for different national trail designations and possible ways to administer the trail. The team then used a set of trail criteria to evaluate the feasibility and desirability of designating the ADT as a national scenic trail and assessed the environmental, social, and cultural effects of implementing the alternatives.

Throughout the planning process, the study team sought the views of the public. Due to the nationwide interest in this trail and the tight schedule for completing the study, the study team primarily relied on newsletters to communicate with the public. An extensive mailing list, including over 2,400 names of individuals and groups, was developed during the course of the study. Newsletters were mailed out in February and April of 1994 and January of 1995. Feedback from the general public was provided to the team through mailback response forms. Telephone calls and meetings were also used to obtain the views of local, state, and federal agencies, trail and outdoor recreation organizations, congressional delegations, interested citizens, and other targeted groups. (A summary of the public comments received is included in appendix B.)

The next major step was publication of the draft document. After considering public comments on the draft study/environmental assessment, this final study/environmental assessment was prepared. The final study will be transmitted to Congress by the secretary of the interior and be made available to the public. Congress will ultimately decide what action to take on the trail.

American Hiking Society and the ADT

It is important to note that work is proceeding on the trail independently of this study. Local trail groups, the ADT volunteer state committees, and the American Hiking Society

are taking action to establish the trail. A national ADT coordinator, employed by the society, is promoting the trail and working with local groups along the trail. The ADT state committees are refining the route, in many cases proposing minor changes from the original scouting expedition route to address problems and opportunities. In particular, the American Hiking Society and the state committees are working to move the trail off roads as opportunities arise. In fact, as a result of the impetus provided by this study and the work of many volunteers, 274 miles of the ADT route were moved off road rights-of-way in 1993 and 1994. Volunteers are also marking the trail with the ADT logo. To date, over 3,000 miles have been marked. Work is also proceeding on preparing detailed state maps, and a trail guidebook (Lukei 1995) has been published.

PURPOSES OF THE ADT

One of the first tasks of the study team, in concert with the interagency team, was to identify the trail's purposes. Trail purposes provide a framework for understanding why the ADT was created, for determining what type of trail it is, how it should be used, where it should be located, and how it should be managed. The purpose statements also formed the basis for the study's alternatives.

Five purposes were identified that apply specifically to the ADT. These purposes were primarily based on the trail proponents' ideas and visions for the trail. The purposes of the ADT are as follows:

Provide a continuous coast-to-coast route for nonmotorized users (e.g., hikers, bicyclists, equestrians).

Establish a marked route connecting representative examples of America's heritage.

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INTRODUCTION

Serve as an east-to-west spine, linking many major trails and strengthening the national network of trails.

Enable trail users to experience the spectrum of American landscapes, from urban to rural to backcountry to wildlands.

Create opportunities for people to meet, communicate with, and appreciate others from around America and the world.

The study team suggests that any legislation relative to the ADT clearly recognize these purposes as a guide for future management.