

# Old Spanish Trail News

Number 2, Fall 2006

## Scoping Meetings Completed in Six States along the Old Spanish National Historic Trail

A joint National Park Service and Bureau of Land Management planning team held a series of 21 public meetings along the Old Spanish NHT this past winter and spring. More than 350 members of communities along the trail came to these meetings in New Mexico, Utah, Colorado, Arizona, Nevada, and California.

This newsletter summarizes some of the comments collected during the 120-day scoping period from January 18-May 17. A full report is available on three websites: [www.nm.blm.gov](http://www.nm.blm.gov), [www.nps.gov/olsp](http://www.nps.gov/olsp) and at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?parkId=454&projectId=12591>

Five crucial planning issues were posted at each meeting:

1. There is a need to define the trail corridor and its resources.
2. What opportunities are available to provide for education, interpretation, and recreation?
3. How do we include multiple voices in telling the trail's stories?
4. How will protection of the trail affect other uses within and adjacent to the trail corridor? How will other land uses in the corridor impact the trail?



*Maps of the Old Spanish NHT attracted attention at every public meeting.*

5. Are there economic opportunities related to recreational use of the trail?

Now that scoping is complete, the team is developing alternatives, writing the management plan, and analyzing environmental impacts. A draft plan is expected in late 2007. Consultation with American Indian tribes is ongoing, and other trail-related studies are underway.

Thank you to those of you who took the time to attend one or more of the public meetings, and

to those who submitted emails and written comments. New trail information, as well as your ideas on future administration, is still being accepted. We look forward to your continued participation in this planning effort.

Old Spanish NHT Planning Team

Sarah Schlanger, BLM  
Sharon Brown, NPS  
Otis Halfmoon, NPS  
Aaron Mahr, NPS



## Message from the Old Spanish NHT Planning Team

Dear Friends,

Welcome back to the Old Spanish National Historic Trail Comprehensive Management Plan. We are now almost a year into the process, and have met our deadline for completing public scoping. Many of you attended one of the public meetings, and several of you also attended the mapping workshop, held last March in Phoenix.

Next comes the challenge of incorporating your ideas into the development of alternatives that will address the planning issues. This step will be followed by the actual writing of the plan. The Old Spanish Trail Association remains our primary nonfederal partner for planning and trail administration.

We want to thank all of you who spoke with knowledge and conviction about the trail at the meetings, and we look forward to your continued participation in this planning effort.

Sarah H. Schlanger  
New Mexico Bureau of Land Management  
PO Box 27115  
Santa Fe, NM 87502  
505/438-7454 tel  
Sarah\_Schlanger@blm.gov

Aaron Mahr  
National Trails System-Santa Fe  
National Park Service  
PO Box 728  
Santa Fe, NM 87505  
505/988-6736 tel  
aaron\_mahr@nps.gov

Otis Halfmoon  
National Park Service  
505/988-6739 tel  
otis\_halfmoon@nps.gov

Sharon A. Brown  
National Park Service  
360/816-6233 tel  
sharon\_brown@nps.gov

## Trail Definition and Protection

The issue of how to define the trail and the possibility of defining a trail corridor drove discussions at several public meetings and was addressed in written comments. Many people noted that the kind of use the trail received historically created a “corridor” rather than a well-defined track along the trail route. Concerns were raised that designating a trail corridor of some predetermined width (to encompass the likely travel route, afford sufficient space for developing visitor amenities including companion trails, exhibits, and overlooks, and protect scenic values) would lead to use restrictions on existing industries or restrict the full development of energy or other recreation resources. In other places a defined corridor might serve to guide activities and address goals.

Conversely, fears were also expressed that failing to designate a corridor would hamper management efforts. While non-industry members of the public were in favor of establishing protective corridors for scenic and landscape values, industry representatives suggested avoiding exclusive use corridors, limiting designation of management corridors and use prescriptions to those trail segments exhibiting distinct, physical trail traces or the established presence of trail resources, and stressing multiple use and broad access.

People noted that the kind of use the trail received during its period of significance created a “corridor”

rather than a well-defined track along the trail route. A number of meeting attendees suggested that the trail route be addressed in terms of the qualities present along trail segments and that a corridor concept be explored as a way of fitting uses to different portions of the trail. In some places, there might be no defined corridor, and trail use would be focused on individual trail resources and modern travel routes rather than the historic route.

Discussions of trail and resource protection included developing coordinated interagency plans for resource protection and having protection plans in place before promoting public use. There was strong sentiment that the management plan should discourage disturbance of backcountry and undeveloped segments of trail and refrain from promoting new or additional uses in areas with undisturbed trail route and landscapes.

There was broad support for restricting motorized uses to existing roads and developed trails. Proposed protection measures included using existing paved travel routes for visitors and considering adaptive reuse of construction disturbances, abandoned railroad beds, and utility rights of ways as recreational trails that provide access to trail resources or recreation experiences. Rock art was singled out as a cultural resource needing protection.



## Creating Trail Community Opportunities

Scoping meeting attendees explored options for trail-related tourism and recreation-based activities focusing on the NHT. Community strengths such as existing recreational resources, hospitality, and visitor interactions with local people, were mentioned as draws to the trail.

Concerns were raised that the NHT designation might stifle economic opportunities, and that outsiders might benefit more from trail-related development than members of local communities. The trail management plan was promoted as a means to support regional economic benefits through collaboration with and engagement of private enterprises, banks, county tourism boards, regional enterprise zones, and other



**A Pahrump, Nevada welcome!**

cultural/historical and economic development organizations.

Many comments focused on local physical and thematic connections to the historic trail, including on-the-ground heritage resources, related interpretive stories, existing recreational

trails, and opportunities for tourism and economic development. On-going community activities that are thematically-related to the trail were identified, such as cultural festivals and demonstrations.

The opportunity to use the NHT designation as a framework upon which to link local community planning and development was mentioned.

People also talked about the need to conduct oral histories, in an effort to gather and document trail-related information in a timely way.

## Providing for Interpretation/Education and Multiple Voices

Providing quality interpretation related to the trail was of great interest to many people. In addition to developing new, stand-alone interpretive products (such as publications, websites, films, and exhibits), and programs (tours, lectures, guided walks and talks, and cultural demonstrations), people wanted to strengthen existing interpretation at trail-related trailheads, museums, and visitor centers. The need to attract and engage young people was mentioned at many meetings.

People were knowledgeable about the trail and provided details of regional and local historical events. They recognized that the

trail's precursors were American Indian trails, and they provided information about the trail during the fur trade era, Hispanic connections during the Mexican period, the illicit enslaving of Indian people, and later use by the military and others.

Many comments addressed how interpretation would generate interest in the trail, convey the trail's national importance, and tell local trail stories. People thought that trail interpretation should include American Indian, Hispanic, and Anglo-American perspectives.

Suggestions for providing educational programming included

“hands-on” activities, publications, traveling kits, self-guided materials, genealogy, re-enactments, multi-cultural stories, and tying into local school curriculum.

Several people commented on local opportunities to partner with youth groups and Elderhostel, to provide life-long learning. Involving tribal youth in trail-related educational activities was mentioned as a specific need, as well as designing programs that promote cross-generational involvement. Utilizing local people and local resources, such as museums and colleges, was mentioned as a way to develop quality educational programs.



# Old Spanish National Historic Trail

National Trails System-Santa Fe  
PO 728  
Santa Fe, NM 87504

National Park Service  
Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Department of the Interior

PRSRT STD  
U.S. Postage Paid  
National Park Service  
Santa Fe, NM  
Permit No. G-83



Many of you may be familiar with the Passport Stamp program for national parks. Now you can obtain a stamp for the Old Spanish NHT at BLM, US Forest Service, and NPS visitor centers located along the trail in six states.

For locations, see the project and trail websites.

## Trail Mapping

At a mapping workshop in Phoenix last spring, we worked with Old Spanish Trail Association members and trail scholars to safeguard trail data and improve our presentation of the trail route in electronic media.

You can now follow the general trail routes on topo maps and detailed air imagery through an NPS interactive map at [http://imgis.nps.gov/national\\_historic\\_trails.html](http://imgis.nps.gov/national_historic_trails.html)

The "zoom" limit is set to a scale of 1:100,000 and above. Zoom in further and you'll still be able to see the terrain, but you won't be able to see the trail (and we won't be inviting folks to head out "cross

country" to follow our maps on to private land holdings or through areas we haven't fully studied).

Limiting the trail display like this should get rid of some of the strange twists and turns that show up when the general trail routes are plotted on very detailed maps.

As another safeguard, the raw trail route data has been taken off the public access websites. Please contact trail administrators directly if you are interested in this data.

Trail maps created for the public scoping meetings are available for downloading at [www.nm.blm.gov](http://www.nm.blm.gov)

