
Old Spanish Trail News

Planning for the Future Gets Underway Across Six States

Dear Friends,

As you know, the Old Spanish Trail is a remarkable resource that crosses six states in the American West. It served as the third leg of a mid-nineteenth century international trail network, and today along the trail's routes you can find spectacular scenery, historic communities, and life-giving springs.

Authorized by Congress in December 2002, the Old Spanish National Historic Trail commemorates the Santa Fe-to-Los Angeles route that sent dry goods west and horses and mules east. The Old Spanish Trail forged the first overland link to California for the east coast markets served by the Santa Fe Trail and the trade-hungry markets of Mexico and New Mexico using El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro. These 3 historic trails are part of a National Trails System that includes 24 national historic and scenic trails in the United States.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and National Park Service (NPS) will jointly plan and administer the Old Spanish National Historic Trail. A planning process has been started for a Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP) and Draft Environ-



Scenic Mojave Road crosses Mojave National Preserve in California.

mental Impact Statement (DEIS) to guide the trail's development.

A preplan, containing the planning process steps and schedule, has been signed by representatives from both agencies. A planning team has been formed, and now that funding has been obtained, public scoping meetings will be held across New Mexico, Utah, Colorado, Arizona, Nevada, and California beginning in early 2006.

We encourage you to attend a public meeting and to meet us.

Working together we can find a way to protect the resources, develop partner relationships, and tell the stories of the Old Spanish National Historic Trail.

Sincerely,
Old Spanish NHT planning team

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Message from the Old Spanish NHT Planning Team

Welcome to the Old Spanish National Historic Trail Comprehensive Management Plan. We wish to announce the start of this project and invite you to participate.

The planning process will be conducted in consultation with federal, state, and local agencies, along with American Indian nations and other interested organizations and individuals. The Old Spanish Trail Association is our primary nonfederal partner for both planning and trail administration.

Over the next few years we will be out on the trail verifying routes on the ground, gathering resource data, visiting historic sites, and meeting and listening to people with ideas for the trail's future. We are looking forward to meeting you!



What are the Planning Issues?

Planning issues are the specific questions that the planning process would resolve in alternatives that are proposed for public review. The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 requires that federal agencies consider a variety of ways to protect resources and provide for visitor use along the trail.

Public comments will help define the trail's purpose and stories. They will also help define goals for long-term resource protection, visitor experiences, and management.

Planning issues for the Old Spanish National Historic Trail include:

1. There is a need to define the trail corridor and its resources. The general route taken by travelers moving pack trains from northern New Mexico to southern California is well known, but in the absence of physical features identifying trail use, the CMP must identify and define what lands and resources will be managed.
2. What opportunities are available to provide for education, interpretation, and recreation? A purpose of the National Trails System and the designation of the Old Spanish NHT is to provide for public recreation and education. The CMP will define recreational uses along the trail, and the methods used to tell the trail's stories.
3. How do we include multiple voices in telling the trail's stories? The Old Spanish Trail carried cultural trading practices across the continent and across the lands of many different tribes. Hispanics, Anglo-Americans, and American Indians all played critical roles in, and were impacted by, trail trade. The trail's heritage is diverse.
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? Many resource values and land uses occur along the Old Spanish Trail. Some may be compatible with trail designation, but others may not. The CMP will prescribe management practices on public lands within the trail corridor.
5. Are there economic opportunities related to recreational use of the trail? At present, few people use the trail for recreation. Because the National Trails System Act encourages such use, the CMP will identify opportunities for recreation and economic development.



History of the Old Spanish Trail

Like most trails in the Americas, the Old Spanish Trail has roots in American Indian trade networks. After the Spanish settled in what are now New Mexico and California, explorers searched for a viable overland link between the two colonies.

In 1829, Mexican trader Antonio Armijo successfully established a route from Abiquiú, New Mexico, to Los Angeles, where he traded serapes and other New Mexican goods for horses and mules. Trade in goods, livestock, and enslaved people taken from American Indian communities along the route, soon followed.

Eventually, two main pack trails emerged – the Armijo Route and



the Northern Route. The North Branch of the Old Spanish Trail, running up through the San Luis Valley and Gunnison River country of Colorado and eastern Utah, was

a variant of the Northern Route. Although primarily a horse and burro pack route for trade, the Old Spanish Trail also was used by explorers, trappers, prospectors, immigrants, and military expeditions.

Use of the trail decreased after 1848, as people followed other routes to reach California. Some trail sections received limited, local use, while wagon roads replaced other sections. Completion of the transcontinental and other railroads brought an end to many of the overland trails, including the Old Spanish Trail.

Old Spanish NHT Partnership Logo



The design, development and adoption of an official trail logo is an important part of the planning process. Each historic and scenic trail in the National Trail System has a distinctive logo, used to identify the trail and to represent its partners. The logo will be trademarked, and its use approved on a case-by-case basis. Most often, the logo is displayed at historic sites and visitor centers, and on interpretive and educational materials. These four logo designs are **draft** options being considered for the Old Spanish NHT.

What do you think of them?
Please send us your comments.



Old Spanish National Historic Trail

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U.S. Department of the Interior



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How Can You Participate?

Your thoughts and ideas are important for this planning process. We want your input whether through your attendance at public meetings, or by phone, fax, or email.

A website for this planning project is at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?projectId=12591>

Planning updates are also at these websites: www.nps.gov/olsp and www.nm.blm.gov

General planning schedule:
Scoping meetings in early 2006,
development of alternatives in
summer 2006, public review draft
in 2007, and final plan in 2008.

We've developed a Geographic Information System (GIS-based) interactive map of the Old Spanish NHT routes that allows you to follow the planning team's thinking about trail resources and management opportunities in California. This year we will develop similar maps for the other five states the Old Spanish NHT crosses. To track our progress or to review the map information on the Web, see: http://imgis.nps.gov/national_historic_trails.html

You may also contact Sarah Schlanger for a CD copy of the program.

