



Camino Real Trail News

Planning for El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail is Underway

¡Bienvenidos! Welcome!

El Camino Real de los Tejas (The Royal Road to the Tejas) is a remarkable historic trail crossing Mexico and the two American states of Texas and Louisiana. This Spanish royal road was established to link Mexico City with Los Adaes, the provincial capital of Texas from 1722 to 1772. Approximately 2,500 miles long, this corridor of changing routes from Mexico City to the Red River Valley was traveled for over 300 years. One route, the San Antonio Road, saw heavy use by American immigrants. Today along the trail's routes you can trace the history of Texas and northwestern Louisiana through remaining trail traces, river crossings, historic sites, and communities.

To honor this heritage, the United States Congress authorized El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail in October 2004, under the National Trails System Act of 1968. The national historic trail is 1,000 miles long, and crosses Texas into Louisiana. It will be administered by the National Park Service, and it joins a system of national historic, scenic, and recreational trails crossing the United States.



Traces of El Camino Real de los Tejas at Los Adaes invite you to follow a path through history.

What is a National Historic Trail?

A national historic trail is an extended trail that follows as closely as possible the original routes of travel associated with important historic events.

Examples of other national historic trails include the Oregon Trail, Santa Fe Trail, Trail of Tears, and El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro in Texas and New Mexico. The trail designations are continuous from end to end, but developed trails are not necessarily continuous – they may include sections

of land areas, land or water segments, or other specific sites.

Some historic sites and trail segments are in private ownership, such as the Guadalupe River crossing in DeWitt County and Apache Pass in Milam County, Texas. Other sites and segments are in public ownership, such as the mission, presidio, and trail traces at Los Adaes State Historic Site in Robeline, Louisiana.

The National Park Service will conserve historic resources and tell the trail's story through cooperative activities with a variety of partners.

Message from the Superintendent

Dear Friends,

Welcome to El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail Comprehensive Management Plan and Environmental Assessment. We wish to announce the start of this project and invite you to participate.

The planning process will be conducted over the next two years in consultation with federal, state, and local agencies, as well as American Indian nations and other interested organizations and individuals in Louisiana, Texas, and Mexico.

Staff from the National Park Service's National Trails System Office in Santa Fe, New Mexico, will lead the planning effort. The Texas state legislature designated the Texas Historical Commission as the lead state agency for this planning effort.

You will have several opportunities during the planning process to provide your thoughts on this important project. Your participation is important, and we urge your continued involvement as trail planning and implementation proceeds. Together we can determine the future of this historic trail.

Sincerely,

Aaron Mahr
Superintendent
National Trails System-Intermountain Region
National Park Service

What is a Comprehensive Management Plan?

A comprehensive management plan will implement the legislation passed by Congress to add El Camino Real de los Tejas to the National Trail System. It will provide long-term guidance for administering the trail, including guidance for future (20- 30 years) public use and protection of trail-related resources.

The purpose of the environmental assessment is to identify, evaluate, and document the potential effects of the proposed administration of the national historic trail.

What are the planning issues?

The comprehensive management plan will address specific questions in alternatives that are proposed for public review.

- How will trail-related resources, including historic buildings and sites, archeology, and landscapes, be identified and protected?

- How will visitors learn about, and be directed to, trail-related cultural and recreational activities?

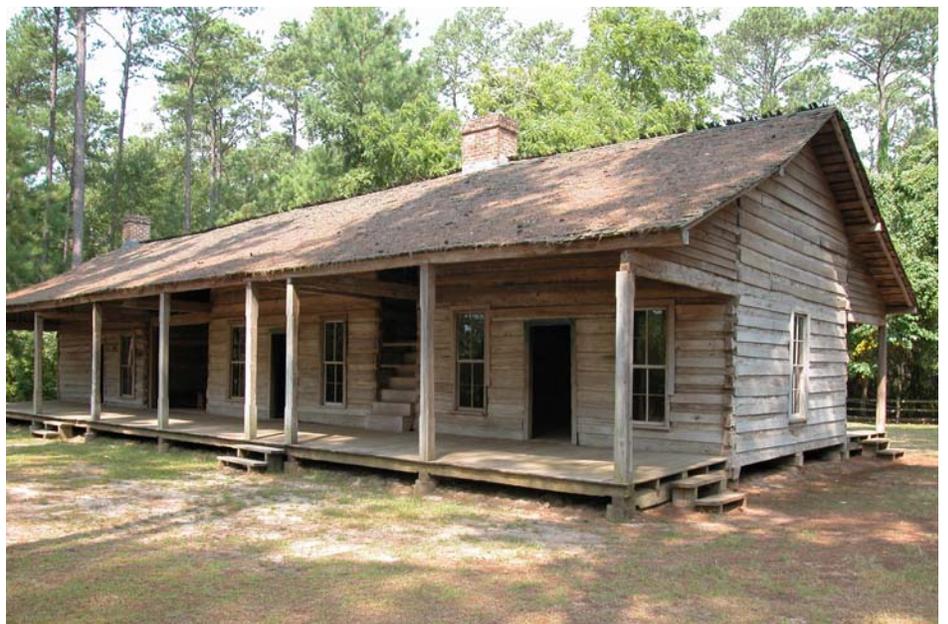
- How will coordinated trail-wide interpretation and education be provided to visitors and local residents?

- How will the perspectives of all people associated with the trail's history be included in interpretive and educational materials?

- How can American and Mexican public awareness of the trail be increased?

- What is the most effective use of partnerships to achieve goals for the trail's future?

We are interested in hearing about other planning issues that you may have related to El Camino Real.



The Joseph Rice Log Cabin provided a resting place for travelers on the San Antonio Road.

Importance of El Camino Real de los Tejas

Routes used by Spanish explorers that became El Camino Real followed established Indian trails and trade routes. The road's development had irreversible impacts on the native people of Texas and Louisiana. It linked unconnected cultural and linguistic groups, and served as an agent for cultural diffusion, biological exchange, and communication.

Spanish entradas and the establishment of missions and presidios along El Camino Real indicated Spanish claims to the region, which was part of the larger 17th century power struggle among Spain, France, and England to control North America.

El Camino Real provided the only form of overland travel and means of communication between the



The various routes of El Camino Real de los Tejas have been identified and marked for modern-day travelers

northeastern frontier, and other New Spain settlements during the colonial period. It served as an agent of change, being a conduit for exploration, trade, migration, settlement, and movement of cattle and other livestock.

El Camino Real provided access to armies on the move for more than 150 years, including Spanish,

French, Mexican, Republic of Texas, and American – and helped determine the southern and western boundaries of the United States and Mexico.

Thousands of American immigrants into Texas arrived via a section of El Camino Real known as the San Antonio Road. Their presence and activities led to revolt against Mexico, and to Texas independence and statehood.

Use of El Camino Real de los Tejas fostered the mix of Spanish and Mexican traditions, laws, and cultures with those of America, resulting in a rich legacy reflected in the people, landscapes, place names, languages, music, and arts of Texas and Louisiana today.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Together with partners, staffs in the National Trail System offices in Santa Fe and Salt Lake City administer 9 of the 17 national historic trails in the National Trail System.

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The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

Get Involved in Your Trail History!

There are many ways for you to learn more about the trail and to get involved with its planning and development.

- Attend a planning meeting
- Review the draft plan
- Tour a trail-related historic site or museum
- Visit a trail-related route or walk in a trace
- Join a trails association
- Undertake a trails-related project in your community
- Get others involved with the trail

Please visit the trail on the Web at:

www.nps.gov/elte

<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?parkId=453&projectId=12599>



EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

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What is the Planning Schedule?

Initial public scoping meetings are being scheduled in 2007 for:

April 23 – San Antonio, Texas
April 24 – Laredo, Texas
April 25 – Carrizo Springs, Texas
April 26 – Cuero, Texas
April 30 – Bastrop, Texas
May 1 – Crockett, Texas
May 2 – Nacogdoches, Texas
May 3 – Natchitoches, Louisiana

Following the public meetings:

May- September 2007
Development of preliminary alternatives and writing of draft plan and environmental assessment

October- December 2007
National Park Service internal reviews of draft plan

January- May 2008
Public review of draft plan, with second round of public meetings

June- August 2008
Preparation of final plan

September 2008
Issuance of Finding of No Significant Impact, and plan adoption