



Trail Study News

Trail of Tears National Historic Trail Additional Routes Feasibility Study

Greetings!

In 1987, Congress designated two routes of Cherokee removal as the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail. At that time, many routes used during removal were not well documented and were not included in the national historic trail. Thus, important parts of the story of Cherokee removal were not being told, including the very important round-up routes from the removal forts in North Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, and Alabama, as well as the Benge and Bell routes to Indian Territory.

With a strong effort by many researchers along the trail, these routes have now been identified. On December 1, 2006, President Bush signed Public Law 109-378 directing the National Park Service (NPS) to amend the 1986 Trail of Tears Feasibility Study to determine if the additional routes meet the criteria in the National Trails System Act for designation as part of the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail. The study will also determine the suitability and feasibility of such designation.

Although the study is only looking at routes followed by the Cherokee, some of these routes were also used during the removal of the Choctaw,



The Bell Route of the Trail of Tears at Village Creek State Park in Arkansas could become part of the Trail of Tears

Chickasaw, Muscogee (Creek), and Seminole peoples and their story is an important part of the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail.

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, Nez Perce (Nee Me Poo), and El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro. 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 and other sites and segments are in public ownership. Participation in National Historic Trail programs is voluntary and private landowners along the trail retain all legal rights to their property.

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

Message from the Superintendent

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail Feasibility Study Amendment. We wish to announce the start of this project and invite you to participate.

The study process will be conducted over the next five months in consultation with federal, state, and local agencies, as well as American Indian nations and other interested organizations and individuals in North Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, Alabama, Kentucky, Missouri, Arkansas, and Oklahoma.

Staff from the National Park Service's National Trails System Office in Santa Fe, New Mexico, will lead the effort.

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

Sincerely,



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



The Trail of Tears Association is a trailwide non-profit organization that is dedicated to the preservation of the Trail of Tears and telling the story of the trail. More information can be found at:

www.nationaltota.org

What is a Feasibility Study?

A feasibility study amendment and environmental assessment will implement the legislation passed by Congress to consider the addition of routes to the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail. It will be based on criteria in the National Trails System Act and with public input to determine the desirability and feasibility of adding these routes.

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

What are the study issues?

The National Park Service with the help of many researchers has been documenting these trail routes for the past 10 years. We have determined that the routes meet most of the criteria for designation under the National Trails System Act, but there are important

questions that can only be answered with public and other government agency involvement.

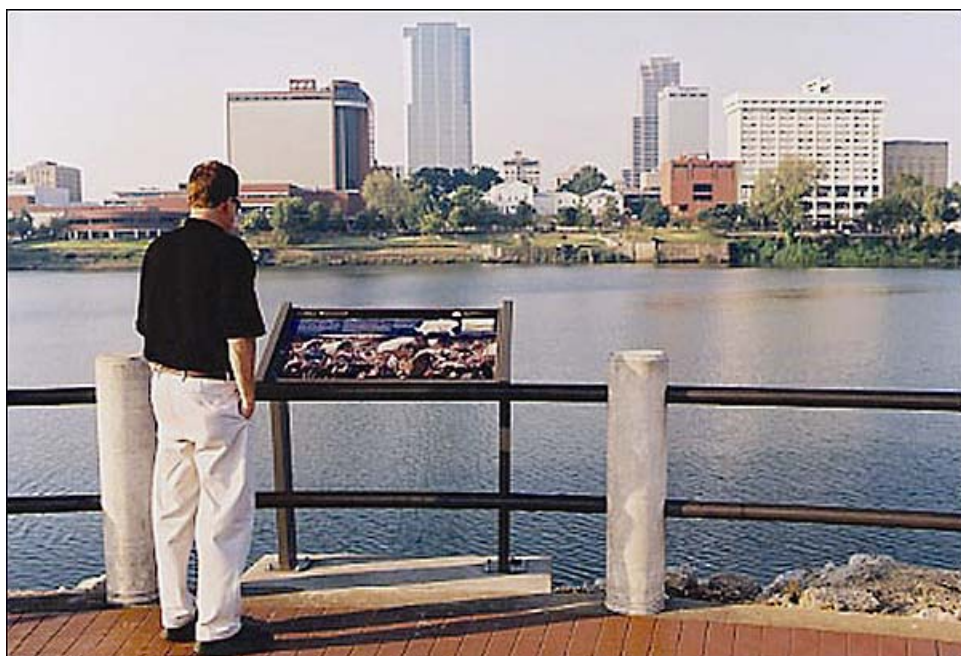
--Should these routes be added to the existing Trail of Tears National Historic Trail?

-- What might be the impacts to natural resources (air, water, soil, plants, animals, etc.) if the routes become part of the national historic trail?

-- What might be the effects on cultural resources if the routes become part of the national historic trail?

--What would be the economic or social effects of adding these routes to the national historic trail?

We are also interested in hearing about other issues that you may have related to the addition of these routes to the trail.



The development of on-site interpretive media, such as this wayside exhibit along the Arkansas River in North Little Rock, Ark., provide trail visitors the opportunity to connect with the story of the Trail of Tears NHT. The proposed additions to the trail could be developed in a similar manner.

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Trail of Tears National Historic Trail (Including Proposed Routes for Study)



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 feasibility study scoping meeting
- Review the draft study
- 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/trte

You may also provide comments online from July 9 – August 9, 2007 at:

<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?parkID=448&projectId=17939>



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What is the Planning Schedule?

Public scoping meetings will be held at the following locations:

July 10 – Murphy, North Carolina
Murphy Public Library
4pm – 9 Blumenthal Street

July 11 – Chattanooga, Tennessee
Development Resource Center
1pm – 1250 Market Street

July 11 – Calhoun, Georgia
Gordon Cnty. Chamber of Commerce
5:30pm – 300 S. Wall Street

July 12 – Fort Payne, Alabama
DeKalb Theater
11am – 306 Gault Avenue North

July 12 – Sheffield, Alabama
Sheffield Recreation Center
5:30pm – 2901 E. 19th Avenue

July 13 – Pulaski, Tennessee
City Hall, Council Room
1pm – 203 S. 1st Street

July 14 – Memphis, Tennessee
Holiday Inn Select, Magnolia Rm
1pm – 160 Union Avenue

July 16 – Mayfield, Kentucky
Graves County Public Library
11am – 601 N. 17th Street

July 16 – Poplar Bluff, Missouri
Poplar Bluff Chamber of Commerce
5:30pm – 1111 W. Pine Street

July 17 – Batesville, Arkansas
Old Independence Regional Museum
1pm – 380 S. 9th Street

July 18 – Little Rock, Arkansas
Historic Arkansas Museum
Ottenheimer Theater
1pm – 200 E. 3rd Street

July 19 – Tahlequah, Oklahoma
Cherokee Nation Tribal Complex
1pm – 17675 S. Muskogee Ave.

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