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Chapter 1

PURPOSE/PROCESS/ISSUES

PURPOSE/NEED FOR ACTION

The purpose of the Comprehensive Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (CMP/EIS) is to establish the administrative objectives, policies, processes, and management actions needed to fulfill the preservation and public use goals for El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail (NHT). El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro (The Royal Road of the Interior) was added to the National Trails System by P.L. 106- 307 on October 13, 2000 (see Appendix A), pursuant to the National Trails System Act, P.L. 90- 543, of October 2, 1968, as amended (see Map 1 and Appendix B).

The CMP/EIS will also provide a framework for managing and allocating uses of BLM- administered lands along the trail in New Mexico. The plan will be comprehensive in nature, and will describe future conditions, set goals, and address and resolve issues along El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro NHT that have been identified through agency, interagency, and public scoping efforts. The plan is needed in order to comply with the requirements of the National Trails System Act; and to address the management issues and concerns related to administration and management, resource protection, interpretation and visitor experience, uses of the NHT, and site development and marking.

National historic trails are set aside to identify and protect a historic route and its remnants for public use and enjoyment. These are extended trails that follow as closely as possible and practicable original routes of travel that are of national historical significance.

Existing trail segments already in federal ownership will become the initial components of El Camino de Tierra Adentro NHT. Other trail segments could be developed and protected

through various means, such as cooperative and certification agreements and/or easements and actions by state and local government and private organizations. There would be little or no federal acquisition of private lands. Acquisition would be on a willing- seller basis.

This CMP/EIS identifies and explains the desired future conditions to be maintained or achieved, and administrative and management actions necessary to achieve objectives. Through these actions, El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro NHT will be administered and managed according to the intent of Congress as expressed in the establishing legislation and the National Trails System Act.

BACKGROUND/LOCATION

The NPS prepared a feasibility study in 1997 that subsequently led to the designation of the 404-mile El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro NHT from El Paso, Texas, to San Juan Pueblo, New Mexico (see Map 2). The study documented the international significance of the entire route from Mexico City to New Mexico's respective Spanish colonial capitals at San Juan Pueblo (1598- 1600), San Gabriel (1600- 1609), and Santa Fe (1609- 1821). During that period, the road formed part of a network of royal roads throughout Mexico that ran from Spanish capital to Spanish capital. When Mexican independence was achieved, El Camino Real ceased to be a royal road, because the Spanish crown had been ousted. However, the route continued in use during the Mexican National Period, as Mexican and Indian travelers, traders, settlers, soldiers, clergymen, and Anglo- American merchants continued their activities along it. Significance has also been found for succeeding periods, including the Mexican National Period (1821- 1848), and part of the U. S. Territorial



Alaska



United States

**El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro
National Historic Trail**

Mexico



No scale



Hawaii

Aie Kahakai NHT

- National Historic Trail
- - - - - National Scenic Trail

National Trails System
El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro
National Historic Trail

United States Department of the Interior
 National Park Service
 Bureau of Land Management



**El Camino Real
United States and Mexico
El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro
National Historic Trail**

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Bureau of Land Management

Period of New Mexico (1848- 1882). San Juan Pueblo was the terminus of the trail because it was the first provincial capital of the northern province of New Spain.

The NHT passes through four BLM Field Office administrative areas with five existing Resource Management Plans (RMPs). The following RMPs were reviewed for consistency with goals, objectives, and actions proposed under the various alternatives for the NHT: (1) Taos RMP, (2) Río Puerco RMP, (3) Socorro RMP, (4) White Sands RMP, and (5) Mimbres RMP. The trail runs through 16.9 miles of public lands in the Taos Field Office; 14.2 miles of BLM- administered lands in the Socorro Field Office; and 28.6 miles of public lands in the Las Cruces Field Office (mileages include duplicate, or variant, routes).

Approximately 33.3 miles of the NHT pass through the Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge, and 56.8 miles pass through the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge—both of these administered by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS). Approximately 7.7 miles of the NHT pass through the Santa Fe National Forest, administered by the USDA Forest Service (USFS); and approximately 4.6 miles of trail cross lands administered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The remainder of the trail passes through 376.7 miles of private lands; 24.7 miles of state- administered lands; and 89.5 miles of North American Indian tribal lands.

RELATIONSHIP TO LEGISLATION/BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT AND NATIONAL PARK SERVICE POLICIES, PLANS, AND PROGRAMS

The National Trails System Act provides legal mandates, policy, and general guidance for the national system of recreation, scenic, and historic trails. The National Trails System was established to provide for the ever- increasing outdoor recreation needs of an expanding population, and to promote the preservation of, public access to, travel within, and enjoyment and appreciation of, the open air, outdoor areas

and historic resources of the nation.

Public Law 106- 307, titled “A Bill to amend the National Trails System Act to designate El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro as a National Historic Trail,” was signed into law on October 13, 2000. The legislation recognizes a 404- mile-long trail from the Río Grande near El Paso, Texas, to San Juan Pueblo, New Mexico, as generally depicted on the maps entitled “A United States Route: El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro,” contained in the March 1997 *El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail Feasibility Study and Environmental Assessment*. The Secretary of the Interior is directed to administer the trail, and land acquisition may only take place with the consent of willing sellers.

This CMP/EIS complies with applicable federal laws, regulations, and planning direction. This includes, but is not limited to, the establishing legislation; the National Trails System Act (NTSA); the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA); the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA); the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA); the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA); the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (AIRFA) regarding affirmative consultation with North American Indian Tribes; Executive Order No. 12898 on Environmental Justice; Executive Order No. 13007 (Indian Sacred Sites), May 24, 1996, 61 FR 26771, 42 USC 1996; Executive Order No. 13175, Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal governments, November 6, 2000, 65 FR 67249, 25 USC 450; Executive Order 13195, Trails for America in the 21st Century; the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; BLM Land Use Plan policy; and NPS Management Policies and Director’s Orders. In accordance with NPS Director’s Order 12, the environmental impact statement (EIS) is being prepared as a part of the plan.

The CMP/EIS will also comply with all state environmental and cultural resources preservation laws as applicable. This CMP/EIS will address and integrate, to the

degree possible, management plans related to management of the lands in or adjacent to the NHT, including, but not limited to, fire management plans, livestock grazing allotment management plans, wildlife habitat management plans, and recreation management plans. It will also include guidance for natural and cultural resources, interpretation and education, trail marking, the certification process, financial and technical assistance, logo marker use and protection, relationships with other conservation programs, facilities management, research and monitoring, lands and rights-of-way, event coordination, communication, and visitor management. On public lands, the document will address both potential RMP-level amendments and site-specific management actions.

Section 5(f) of the National Trails System Act provides that, within two complete fiscal years of the date of enactment (in this case, September 2003), the Secretary of the Interior shall submit the CMP/EIS for the management and use of El Camino de Tierra Adentro NHT to the U.S. Congress, House Resources Committee, and the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

ADMINISTRATION/MANAGEMENT

Administration of national historic trails rests with the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior. In a landmark decision on January 19, 2001, the Secretary of the Interior directed that administrative responsibility for El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro NHT be assigned jointly to the BLM and the NPS, based on the joint memorandum of the two agencies to the Secretary of January 9, 2001 (see Appendix C). Because the two agencies are the joint administrators, they will also cooperatively prepare the CMP/EIS. The joint administration of the trail will be referred to in this document as the Camino Real Administration.

A Memorandum of Understanding for the Administration and Management of National Historic and National Scenic Trails signed by the BLM, NPS, USFS, Federal Highways Administration, and National Endowment for

the Arts on January 19, 2001, defines administration and management as follows:

- **Administration** - Each national trail, established by law, is assigned for administration to a specific federal agency by either the Secretary of the Interior or the Secretary of Agriculture, as designated by Congress. Subject to available funding, the administering agency exercises trail-wide responsibilities under the act for that specific trail. Such responsibilities include coordination among and between agencies and partnership organizations in planning, marking, certification, resource preservation and protection, interpretation, cooperative/interagency agreements, and financial assistance to other cooperating government agencies, landowners, interest groups, and individuals.
- **Management** - Various government and private entities own or manage lands along each national trail. Management responsibilities often include inventorying of resources; mapping, planning, and development of trail segments or sites; compliance; provision of appropriate public access; site interpretation; trail maintenance; marking; resource preservation and protection; viewshed protection; and management of visitor use.

Executive order 13195 dated January 18, 2001 - Trails for America in the 21st Century - provides direction for achieving a common goal of improving America's national system of trails.

This is the first time that a component of the National Trails System has been assigned to two agencies for joint administration. The Long Distance Trails Group Office of the NPS in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and the New Mexico State Office of the BLM are leads for preparation of the plan, and both are responsible for administering the trail as per agency agreement. They will coordinate with the public, various federal agencies, tribal offices, and local and state governments in the plan's development.

Consultation will be an important factor in the process, and should be an integral part of the planning team's efforts.

The joint BLM/NPS administration of El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro NHT must rely on the cooperative management efforts and support of state, local, and private interests, including landowners, to ensure the protection of trail-related resources, to provide outdoor recreational opportunities, and to accomplish the objectives of interpretive programs.

Section 5 (d) of the National Trails System Act calls for the establishment of an advisory council of not more than 35 members, chartered for 10 years. The advisory council will be informed and consulted at appropriate steps in the planning process for the NHT. The council will be an important part of the process, and will contribute valuable information to the plan. It will serve as an excellent source of communication with member publics and the public in general. Once the advisory council has been formed, the study team will work closely with that body. The charter and list of nominating organizations has been forwarded to the Secretary of the Interior.

MANAGEMENT GOALS

Visitor Experience

Visitor experience goals help define actions that should be taken to ensure that visitors would have the opportunity to have specific experiences while visiting El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro NHT. The term "visitor" is used very broadly, and includes people of local, national, and international origin. "Visitor" can also apply to people who visit the NHT through technologies such as the Internet, and it is recognized that visitors are individuals who have different needs and interests.

The visitor experience goals below define the collective range of opportunities that Camino Real Administration and its partners would provide for visitors along the NHT in the future.

Visitors would:

- Feel welcome, be aware of safety, and be satisfied with facilities, services, and recreational opportunities.
- Be able to visit historic and archeological sites, museums, and visitor centers offering interpretation and education.
- Understand and appreciate the trail's history and significance.
- Where permissible, be able to use the trail corridor in ways that conserve significant values and resources. This includes opportunities to drive sections of the historic trail, and to walk, bike, and hike along portions of the trail and/or Río Grande Valley.
- Have opportunities to participate in cultural activities associated with the trail.
- Be able to obtain scholarly research and interpretive materials to learn more about the trail's history and significance.
- Be able to participate in both formal and informal educational programs dealing with the trail.
- Be able to recognize place names and landscapes associated with the trail.
- Be able to access all trail-related facilities and programs, regardless of ability.
- Appreciate and respect the rights of landowners.
- Experience meeting people whose life ways were, and continue to be, influenced by the trail.
- Gain an appreciation for different perspectives about the trail's legacy.

Interpretation and Education

Camino Real Administration and partners along

the NHT would develop a high- quality program of information, interpretation, and education for all visitors.

Camino Real Administration and partners would:

- Promote, develop, and support a variety of interpretive and educational materials appealing to visitors with diverse abilities, interests, and learning styles.
- Work together to ensure that interpretive and educational materials, programs, and media are accurate, consistent, sensitive, and complimentary among the various sites and facilities along the NHT.
- Work cooperatively to provide training for interpreters and educators designed to set and meet high- quality standards.
- Provide trip- planning and other information about the trail to support visitation to trail- related sites and interpretive facilities.

Resource Protection

Camino Real Administration and its partners would:

- Encourage the identification, evaluation, and preservation of Camino Real resources, including archeological and historic sites and trail segments.
- Identify research needs and coordinate research.
- Assist in the development of models for determining the impacts on historic resources from excessive visitor use (using concepts such as carrying capacity); natural processes (such as erosion); incompatible uses (such as mineral development); and others.
- Protect certified NHT segments and historic sites from over- use, inappropriate

use, and vandalism.

- Protect scenic values related to historical resources.
- Identify and protect ethnographic resources (those cultural and natural resources of ongoing significance to contemporary peoples, especially in consultation with North American Indians and Hispanics).
- Encourage uses of adjacent lands that complement the protection and interpretation of NHT resources.
- Encourage research to improve knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of the NHT and related resources, and their significance in history.

Administration

Camino Real Administration would:

- Implement the National Trails System Act in conjunction with other authorities through partnerships, whenever possible.
- Develop an efficient, professional, and effective organization to administer the NHT.
- Achieve the spirit of the interagency memorandum of understanding.
- Promote the management and development of the entire NHT as one integrated system.
- Certify trail segments and sites that meet the criteria described in this management plan, consistent with the purposes of the National Trails System Act as amended.
- Mark the NHT route and auto tour route with standardized and recognizable markers.
- Encourage a unified design theme for

signs, exhibits, and public use facilities.

- Work with partners to provide access to trail resources through certification or other means such as easements.

ISSUES TO BE RESOLVED

A *planning issue* is a matter of controversy or dispute over resource management activities or land use that is well defined or topically discrete, and entails alternatives among which to choose. This definition suggests that one or more entities are interested in a resource on public land, that each entity may have different values for the resource, and that there are different ways (alternatives) in which to resolve the competition or demand.

Management concerns are topics or points of dispute that involve a resource management activity or land use. While some concerns overlap issues, a management concern is generally more important to an individual or a few individuals, as opposed to a planning issue that has a more widespread point of conflict. Addressing management concerns along the NHT helps to ensure a comprehensive examination of federal and state land use management.

Through phone calls, e-mails, letters, and several meetings conducted over the summer of 2001, issues and management concerns have been identified by BLM and NPS personnel; tribal members; local, state and other federal other agencies; and individuals and user groups. The major issue themes that are addressed in the draft CMP/EIS are listed below. Each issue theme, in turn, has a number of different planning questions and management concerns that address more specific uses and resources related to the issue theme.

How will the historic, scenic, and natural resources of the trail be preserved?

- Where are important cultural and historic resources located?
- What management actions are needed to

protect and preserve the historic features of the trail while offering visitors a recreational opportunity?

- How will historic and scenic values be protected against impacts from authorized or unauthorized uses?
- Are changes in off-highway-vehicle designations necessary to protect historic resources?
- Will human activities result in the displacement of wildlife; changes to vegetation, including invasive species; or changes in water quality?

How do people's activities and uses affect the trail?

- How will interpretation be used as an education tool to increase the public's awareness and appreciation of the trail's cultural resources?
- What range of recreational opportunities should be provided?
- What methods will be used to determine appropriate levels of visitor use?
- What new uses, trends, or future use levels are anticipated?
- How will livestock management activities affect management of the trail?
- How will rights-of-way or land-tenure adjustments affect management of the trail?
- How will mineral-related activities affect management of the trail?
- Will plan proposals affect floodplains or wetlands?
- Will plan proposals affect threatened and endangered species?

How will trail management be integrated

with tribal and other government agency and community plans?

- What agreements exist and/or need to be established to promote preservation and interpretation of the trail?
- What opportunities are available to provide visitor services, education, and/or recreation?
- What opportunities, partnerships, and facilities can be capitalized upon to efficiently provide services?

How do we incorporate international interest in the trail?

- How can we tell the whole story of the trail, given that 1,200 miles of the trail lie within Mexico?
- From what historical perspective does Mexico view the trail?
- From what historical perspective does Spain view the trail?

An administrative issue was discussed by the planning team regarding the location of the Camino Real Administration Office. It was determined that locating the office in Santa Fe, New Mexico would be appropriate to take advantage of BLM and NPS staffing and resources and provide a "seamless" operation for the benefit of the public.

PLANNING CRITERIA

Both BLM planning regulations (43 CFR 1610) and NPS planning policies and guidance (Director's Order 2) require the preparation of planning criteria to guide development of all resource management plans or amendments. Planning criteria are the constraints or ground rules that guide and direct the development of the plan, and that determine how the planning team approaches the development of alternatives, and, ultimately, selection of a preferred

alternative. They ensure that plans are tailored to the identified issues, and ensure that unnecessary data collection and analyses are avoided. Planning criteria are based on standards prescribed by applicable laws and regulations; agency guidance; the results of consultation and coordination with the public, other federal, state, and local agencies, and governmental entities, and North American Indian tribes; the analysis of information pertinent to the planning area; and professional judgment.

The following proposed criteria were developed internally and public review was requested during the scoping process:

- Although Spain developed and owned the Camino Real 1540- 1821, the historic period of significance for El Camino Real in the United States extends from 1598 to 1882.
- The draft CMP/EIS should be completed in compliance with Section 5(a) of the National Trails System Act and all other applicable laws. It will meet the requirements of Public Law 106- 307 to protect the trail's natural and historic resources and recreation opportunities.
- The planning team should work cooperatively with the State of New Mexico; tribal governments; county and municipal governments; other federal agencies; and all other interested groups, agencies, and individuals. Public participation will be encouraged throughout the process.
- The planning process will include an EIS that will comply with NEPA and CEQ guidelines.
- The plan will emphasize the protection and enhancement of the historic values of the trail, while providing the public with opportunities for compatible recreation activities.
- Development and management of each segment of the National Trails System shall be designed to harmonize with and

complement any established multiple-use plans for the specific area, in order to ensure continued maximum benefits from the land (Section 7 (a)(2)).

- The lifestyles and concerns of area residents, including the activities of grazing and hunting, will be recognized in the plan.
- Any lands or interests in lands located along the trail that are acquired by federal agencies from willing sellers to accomplish purposes for which the trail was designated will be managed consistent with the National Trails System Act.
- The planning process will involve tribal governments, and will provide strategies for the protection of recognized traditional uses.
- Decisions in the plan should strive to be compatible with the existing plans and policies of adjacent local, state, tribal, and federal agencies, as long as the decisions are in conformance with congressional direction and federal laws, regulations, and policies. The following BLM RMPs will be amended as necessary: (1) Taos RMP, (2) White Sands RMP, and (3) Mimbres RMP.
- The location of the trail has been determined on the basis of historical information and actual field surveys, and will be further refined to meet the direction of the activation memo that Geographic Information Systems (GIS) will be used as an invaluable aid in administering the trail, and as a means by which the public can be provided with accurate trail mapping as quickly as possible.
- Private landowner rights will be respected. Land or interest in private land will only be acquired on a willing-seller basis.
- United States and Mexican public and non-governmental organizations and academic institutions will be consulted.

In cooperation with the Secretary of State, consultation will take place with the government of Mexico and its political subdivisions, for the purpose of exchanging trail information and research, fostering trail preservation and education programs, providing technical assistance, and working to establish an international historic trail.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANNING EFFORTS

There are several other planning efforts that have either just recently taken place or are in the stages of planning that are related to El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro NHT:

- ***Camino Real National Scenic Byway*** - A “Camino Real Scenic Byway Project Corridor Management Plan” was completed in September 1997. The New Mexico State Highway and Transportation Department administers the program, which highlights the cultural and natural experiences along the designated route. The corridor management plan describes those assets.
- ***El Camino Real Historic Corridor Management Plan for the Río Abajo (May 2001)***- This plan is in conjunction with the Camino Real National Scenic Byway and is a component of El Camino Real International Heritage Center. This plan covers the route between Los Lunas and Las Cruces, New Mexico. The plan makes recommendations for preserving and protecting the integrity and value of the trail’s qualities. The plan provided a wealth of opportunities for cooperation between the NHT and the International Heritage Center to benefit communities along the corridor.
- ***El Camino Real International Heritage Center*** - A joint project between New Mexico State Monuments and the BLM, this center will house exhibits, information, and interactive programs related to the Camino Real. A variety of outreach

activities are also planned. Facility and exhibit planning, as well as planning for the management of the center, is underway. The International Heritage Center and the NHT will closely cooperate to implement the individual and joint goals of each program. A Resource Management Plan Amendment/ Environmental Assessment for the center was completed in March 2001.

- **Fort Selden State Monument** - Fort Selden is an established park in the New Mexico State Monuments system. A general management plan is being developed. The Camino Real is associated with Fort Selden, and the planning will take the trail into consideration.
- **Fort Craig** - Fort Craig is a unit of the BLM Socorro Field Office. Planning is under way for additional interpretive exhibits and waysides. Fort Craig is associated with the Camino Real, and current efforts will take the trail into account.
- **San Gabriel** - San Gabriel is on San Juan Pueblo land, and is the location of the first capitol in New Mexico. It is the first terminus of the Camino Real in New Mexico. Planning is under way by the Pueblo of San Juan to develop a "First Capitol" visitor center and possibly some associated facilities.
- **El Camino Real River Connection, Santa Fe** - Planning is under way between a number of public and private

agencies and organizations to restore and preserve a portion of the Santa Fe River. The Camino Real is in close proximity to the River Connection project. They are planning trails and interpretive exhibits in conjunction with their work on the river.

- **El Paso Río Grande Riverpark** - The city and county of El Paso, Texas, in conjunction with a number of public and private organizations, are in the process of planning a series of over 42 miles of trails along the Río Grande, within the corridor of the Camino Real. The planning is taking into account the route, history, and traditions of the Camino Real.
- **El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro Trail Association** - The New Mexico Historical Society is sponsoring the formation of El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro Trail Association. A committee has been formed to organize the association. It is envisioned that the association will be open to any interested parties.

COORDINATION WITH MEXICO

Because 1,200 miles of the NHT lie within Mexico, the enabling legislation authorizes cooperation among United States and Mexican public and non-governmental organizations; academic institutions; and, in consultation with the Secretary of State, the government of Mexico and its political subdivisions. This