

## National Scenic and Historic Trails Presentation Script, April 26, 2013

### SLIDE 1

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### SLIDE 2

Welcome to the Bureau of Land Management's National Scenic and Historic Trails Program presentation on the new National Trails System Manual Series.

In September of 2012, the BLM Director approved the agency's National Trails System Manual Series. The manual series includes the first-ever comprehensive set of policies produced by a Federal agency for trails that are covered under the provisions of the National Trails System Act.

There is no equivalent policy in the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

A BLM and interagency team pioneered this effort to provide the first official and systematic approach for administering and managing America's National System of Trails.

### SLIDE 3

The purpose of this presentation is to focus on the statutory and policy requirements for the administration and management of congressionally designated National Scenic and Historic Trails, as components of the National Trails System. It will also touch on trails under study or recommended as suitable for congressional designation. Secretarially designated trails and rail trails will be briefly mentioned. Other information is available for Secretarially designated trails through WO 250 – the Recreation and Visitor Services Division.

The objectives of this presentation are to provide a brief overview of the establishment of the National Trails System; recap the development of the BLM's National Trails Program; introduce key concepts from National Trail related laws, terminology, and agency responsibilities; and finally, to describe critical policy requirements.

### SLIDE 4

Three National Trails System manuals were produced by the BLM. The project involved development and review by an interdisciplinary team of 33 BLM staff; an interagency trail administration consultation team from the National Park Service and U.S. Forest Service; a representative from the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers; a representative from the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation; and the Office of the Solicitor. The manual series was also reviewed at all levels of the agency with the opportunity for comment.

The three manuals cover both congressionally and secretarially designated National Trails. While certain rail trail authorities exist within the National Trails System Act, no manual section was prepared due to the BLM's limited involvement with that program.

The first two manuals cover two distinct BLM responsibilities for congressionally designated trails. The first manual addresses the special trailwide administration role delegated by the Secretary of the Interior to the BLM. The second manual covers on-the-ground trail management responsibilities. The third manual addresses trails that are secretarially designated - National Recreation, Water, and Side and Connecting trails. This presentation will not specifically address the third manual.

All three manuals, however, are important to sustaining and managing the BLM's trail opportunities and associated resources under the authorities of the National Trails System Act.

#### SLIDE 5

The presentation begins with some important history.

Back in February of 1965, in his Natural Beauty Message to Congress, President Lyndon B. Johnson called for a National System of Trails. By April, then Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall, called on the former Bureau of Outdoor Recreation to take the lead in developing a trail system study. A four member steering committee conducted the study, and included representatives from the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, the National Park Service, the U.S. Forest Service, and the Bureau of Land Management. For the BLM, Eldon F. Holmes, Chief, Recreational Staff, participated on the committee.

The collaborative interagency work resulted in a 1966 report entitled "Trails for America". The report contained an early version of the National Trails System Act.

#### SLIDE 6

The National Trails System Act, or "Trails Act" for short, was signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson on October 2, 1968 - on the same day as the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

In the original Act, only 2 trails were designated by Congress – the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail on the West Coast, and the Appalachian National Scenic Trail on the East Coast. Both the Pacific Crest and the Appalachian Trails were born of citizen vision – as early as 1935 for the PCT and 1921 for the AT. So, in 1968, at the stroke of a pen, the BLM became a National Scenic Trail manager, with land holdings along the Pacific Crest in both California and Oregon. To promote consistency across the States involved with the Pacific Crest Trail, Congress assigned trailwide leadership – or the trail administration role - to the Department of Agriculture, which, in turn, delegated the responsibility to the U.S. Forest Service. Trail administration of the Appalachian Trail was assigned to the Department of the Interior, and delegated to the National Park Service.

In 1978, several more trails were designated by Congress, and a new National Historic Trail category was added to the Act. The Oregon and California National Historic Trails were designated, as was the Iditarod in Alaska. Not only did the BLM become involved in National Historic Trail management upon

the designation of those trails, but in a political environment more favorable to the BLM, the Secretary of the Interior delegated the role of interagency trailwide lead to the agency. So, by 1978, the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, and the BLM had both on-the-ground trail management as well as trailwide administration roles.

Through the collaboration of Federal agencies, the perseverance of citizen volunteers and visionaries, and inspired politicians, the 'grand experiment' called the National Trails System had been created, shaped, and designed for future generations.

#### SLIDE 7

Under the National Trails System Act, two Acts of Congress are normally required before a trail is designated as a National Scenic or National Historic Trail. Federal agencies do not propose trails for National Scenic or National Historic Trail designation. Grassroots trail organizations, however, do.

First, Congress may Act to authorize a National Trail Feasibility Study, pursuant to Sections 5(b) and (c) of the Trails Act. This authorization includes assigning the responsibility for conducting the study to either the Secretary of Agriculture or the Interior. The authorized Secretary then assigns the study to the Federal agency most likely to "administer" the trail – or provide trailwide leadership - in the event that the trail is designated by Congress.

The study is then conducted by the assigned Federal agency in accordance with Section 5(b) of the Trails Act, the trail study authorizing legislation, and other applicable laws and regulations, and in consultation with interested tribes, affected agencies, willing landowners, partners, and interested parties. The completed National Trail Feasibility Study is then transmitted back to Congress.

If the study recommends the trail as "suitable" for congressional designation, Congress may then Act a second time to designate the trail. If designated, Section 5(a) of the Trails Act is amended, adding the trail as a new component of the National Trails System. It can take more than 15 years to complete this process – if at all.

#### SLIDE 8

Today, the National Trails System includes 30 congressionally designated National Scenic and Historic Trails totaling over 54,000 miles; over 1,200 National Recreation Trails located in all 50 States; 6 designated Side and Connecting Trails; and many miles of Rails to Trails projects.

#### SLIDE 9

The Bureau of Land Management conducts day-to-day management on about 6,000 miles of 18 different congressionally designated National Scenic and Historic Trails, in 14 States; including Alaska; all the contiguous western States; Maryland; and Virginia.

The BLM manages more miles of National Historic Trails than any other Federal land managing agency.

The BLM serves as the Trailwide Administrator for Iditarod National Historic Trail, which spans about 2,000 miles across Alaska. The BLM also serves as Trail Administrator for the Old Spanish and the El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trails. The 2,700 mile-long Old Spanish Trail crosses six southwestern states from Santa Fe, New Mexico to Los Angeles, California. As an international trail, the El Camino Real extends across Mexico some 600 miles, from about Mexico City, and then into the U.S. for another 450 miles to Santa Fe, providing a unique opportunity for international coordination and cooperation. For the Old Spanish and El Camino Real, the BLM shares the Trail Administration role with the National Park Service.

The BLM also manages trails under study for possible congressional designation; trails recommended as suitable for congressional designation; and nominates National Recreation, Water, and Connecting and Side trails to the Secretary for potential designation.

#### SLIDE 10

The BLM National Landscape Conservation System contains some of the West's most spectacular landscapes, including those along trails. National Conservation Lands are comprised of more than 887 federally recognized areas and about 27 million acres of Presidentially or Congressionally designated areas – including National Monuments, National Conservation Areas, Wilderness Areas, Wilderness Study Areas, Wild and Scenic Rivers, National Scenic and Historic Trails, and the Conservation Lands of the California Desert. The BLM conserves, protects, and restores these nationally significant landscapes, recognized for their outstanding cultural, ecological, and scientific values.

Out of all possible trail designation types, only Trails Act Section 5(a) congressionally designated National Scenic and Historic Trails, located on BLM public lands, are administered as components of the National Landscape Conservation System. They are managed in concert with several cross-cutting resource programs, such as Recreation Management, Travel Management, Visual Resources, Cultural Resources, Lands and Realty, Engineering, and Fish and Wildlife.

National Conservation Lands, including National Trail units, may overlap – such as the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument, and Upper Missouri Wild and Scenic River in Montana; however, the vast majority of BLM National Trail units are outside of other National Conservation System units. Many iconic places, such as the famous South Pass along the emigrant trails in Wyoming, stand alone.

Through Public Law 111-11 – the legislation which gave permanence to the National Landscape Conservation System – the BLM is required to manage System components, including National Scenic and Historic Trails, under applicable laws - like the Trails Act - and in a manner that protects the values for which the components of the System were designated.

#### SLIDE 11

As components of the National Trails System, and units of the National Landscape Conservation System, it takes leadership from many BLM programs areas to ensure that every mile of trail is appropriately

managed to protect the scenic, historic, cultural, natural, and recreational qualities of the areas through which these trails may pass. It also requires consultation and coordination with the trail administering agency; other Federal, State, and local governments; Tribes; organizations; public land interests, and local landowners. BLM National Trail stewardship is judged by the foresight with which landscape architects, outdoor recreation planners, trail and travel management specialists, archaeologists, historians, land use planners, biologists, realty specialists, engineers, and land managers - carry out this program.

Collaborative and seamless National Trails stewardship is a hallmark of the National Trails System. In this image, hikers see, enjoy, appreciate, and value the journey along the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail. What cannot be seen, however, is the seamless agency, interagency, partner, and volunteer stewardship efforts which provide this high-quality trail experience - from the BLM-managed desert floor to the snow-capped peaks on the National Forest.

#### SLIDE 12

For many decades, the pathways and traces of the National Trails System lay silently on the landscape without significant challenge. The changing landscape of the modern era, however, presents new and challenging issues for National Scenic and Historic Trails management – well beyond those previously encountered. These images depict the reality of some of the types of proposed projects managers, staff, and contractors must analyze and weigh against National Trail purposes, resources, and values in decision-making.

Since the administrative establishment of the National Landscape Conservation System in 2000, the BLM has experienced unprecedented interest in public land oil and gas development, wind energy production, solar power generation, and geothermal resource developments, as well as the associated energy transmission. During those years, it became imperative that the agency address and protect the National Trails System within this new context, in land use planning, proposed project development, and in other facets of management.

#### SLIDE 13

During this time, the Bureau recognized the need for policy guidance for the National Scenic and Historic Trails.

In 2004, a first-ever BLM National Scenic and Historic Trails Workshop was organized and held in Riverside, California. Nearly 100 participants attended, from National Trail partner organizations, trail administering agencies, and BLM staff and managers, to identify issues and opportunities for the BLM to consider to improve the National Trails program.

Based on meeting outcomes – which included over 250 different suggestions – the BLM developed a 10-year strategy, signed by the BLM Director in 2006. The BLM still operates under the guidance from that strategy, as well as the more recent National Landscape Conservation System 15-year Strategy.

A primary objective in the National Trails Strategy included the development of policy for National Scenic and Historic Trails, further supported by the National Landscape Conservation System Strategy. This policy development for the National Trails System within the BLM is now complete, and implementation underway.

#### SLIDE 14

In the next few slides, key policy concepts for congressionally designated National Scenic and Historic Trails will be covered.

Note that for the remainder of the presentation congressionally designated National Scenic and Historic Trails will be referred to generically as “National Trails”, unless use of “National Scenic” or “National Historic Trail” warrants a distinction.

Policy begins with laws. Understanding a few applicable authorities from 3 important laws – the National Trails System Act, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act or FLPMA, and the National Historic Preservation Act – will help illustrate some critical policy provisions covered later in the presentation. Key terminology and related BLM responsibilities will also be addressed.

#### SLIDE 15

The Trails Act directs agencies to provide for the ever-increasing outdoor recreation needs of the Nation, and promote the preservation of, access to, travel within, and enjoyment and appreciation of National Trails.

The Trails Act also provides that “the Congress recognizes the valuable contributions that volunteers and private, nonprofit trail groups have made to the development and maintenance of the Nation’s trails. In recognition of these contributions, it is further the purpose of the Trails Act to encourage and assist volunteer citizen involvement in the planning, development, maintenance, and management, where appropriate, of trails.”

National Scenic Trails are located and planned as a continuous alignment, so as to provide for maximum outdoor recreation potential and for the conservation and enjoyment of the nationally significant scenic, historic, natural, or cultural qualities of the areas through which such trails may pass. National Historic Trails are managed similarly, but as a collection of high potential historic sites and high potential route segments, or Federal Protection Components, and for the purposes of identification and protection of artifacts and remnants.

Agencies may permit activities that do not substantially interfere with the nature and purposes of a trail. Agencies must also make efforts to avoid activities incompatible with trail purposes.

The Trails Act requires development of a Comprehensive Plan by the assigned Trail Administrator to guide trailwide activities. The requirements for Comprehensive Plans are detailed in Section 5 of the Trails Act.

The law also requires the selection of a National Trail Right-of-Way by the trail administering agency, and publication in the Federal Register. Selection of the National Trail Right-of-Way is not optional, and requires coordination among many entities.

#### SLIDE 16

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act, or FLPMA, also guides the actions of the BLM and the National Trails Program.

FLPMA gives the BLM its multiple-use mandate, and strong authorities for the management and protection of BLM public lands and resources. Many of the authorities in FLPMA are also found in the Trails Act, although FLPMA is generally not explicit with regard to National Trails.

FLPMA Section 102(8) states that “it is the policy of the United States that the public lands be managed in a manner that will protect the quality of scientific, scenic, historical, ecological, environmental...and archeological values; (and) that, where appropriate, will preserve and protect certain public lands in their natural condition...”

...and Section 302(a) states that the BLM “shall manage the public lands under principles of multiple use and sustained yield, in accordance with the land use plans...except... where a tract of such public land has been dedicated to specific uses according to any other provisions of law it shall be managed in accordance with such law.” This includes the Trails Act.

Section 302(b) states that in managing the public lands the Secretary shall, by regulation or otherwise, take any action necessary to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation of the lands.

The BLM has the authority under FLPMA, Section 201, to maintain an inventory of public lands, and conduct land use planning under Section 202. The BLM also has the authority to create special management areas.

#### SLIDE 17

The National Historic Preservation Act requires the BLM to take into account the effects of agency actions and authorizations, or undertakings, on properties included in or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

For a property to qualify for the National Register, it must meet National Register Criteria for Evaluation by association with an important historical context and retaining historic integrity of those features necessary to convey its significance. Evaluation includes determining whether the property retains integrity by evaluating aspects of location, design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling, and association.

For example, if the historic setting of properties, such as high potential historic sites or high potential route segments associated with a National Historic Trail contribute to eligibility for the National Register,

the BLM must take into account the effects of undertakings on that setting. Historic settings are, therefore, important considerations in planning for and managing National Historic Trails.

Other laws, regulations, executive orders, and secretarial orders germane to the management of National Trails are listed in the National Trails System manual series.

#### SLIDE 18

Requirements and authorities from the Trails Act, FLPMA, the National Historic Preservation Act, and other laws are the basis for BLM policy regarding the roles and responsibilities for National Trail administration and National Trails management.

For the next few slides, four statutory areas will be addressed in more detail, including the National Trail nature and purposes; substantial interference and avoidance of incompatible activities; selecting or establishing National Trail Rights-of-Way and/or National Trail Management Corridors; and trailwide comprehensive planning and BLM land use planning.

#### SLIDE 19

The BLM defines the Nature and Purposes for National Trails as the character, characteristics, and congressional intent for a trail – along with the resources, qualities, values, associated settings, primary use or uses, and the statement of policy from Section 2 of the Trails Act. Resources, qualities, and values are the significant scenic, historic, cultural, and natural qualities of the areas through which trails may pass – from section 3 and other relevant sections of the Trails Act. This includes recreation, biological, geological, and scientific qualities too. So “RQVs” are a short-hand way of stating a lengthy list.

The “associated settings” are comprised of the geographic extent of the resources, qualities, and values or landscape elements within the surrounding environment that influence the trail experience and contribute to resource conservation or protection. The scenery or “scenic setting” – or what people can see from the trail- can be determined through a viewshed analysis. An historic “setting” can also be readily established through National Historic Preservation Act authorities, a key aspect of protecting vicarious experiences associated with historic properties. Recreation settings are determined through identifying recreation setting characteristics which contribute to high quality recreation experiences. And, for example, the extent of habitat along a trail contributes to the natural or biological setting within the trail area.

The “primary trail use or uses” are the authorized mode or modes of travel, and/or activities identified in the Trails Act, enabling legislation, or legislative history, through the trailwide Comprehensive Plan or approved BLM Resource Management Plan.

Regardless of whether the BLM is the lead agency in administering a National Trail, or managing a National Trail on the ground, to the greatest extent possible, the BLM’s policy is to manage National Trails so as to safeguard the nature and purposes, and to manage in a manner that protects the values of National Trails.



To do so, however, requires that BLM identify, determine, and describe the Nature and Purposes. Without an approved description, there is no standard against which to measure whether or not National Trail characteristics, RQVs, associated settings, or primary trail uses are adequately protected. A sound Nature and Purposes statement provides a benchmark against which to measure adverse impacts, and a basis for developing planning goals and objectives.

#### SLIDE 20

The Trails Act, in Sec 7(c), states that agencies may permit uses that will not substantially interfere with the nature and purposes of National Trails, and efforts shall be made to avoid activities that are incompatible with the purposes for which such trails were established.

The BLM defines substantial interference as a determination that an activity or use affects (hinders or obstructs) the nature and purposes of a designated National Trail. Similarly, an incompatible use is an activity that affects (hinders or obstructs) the nature and purposes of a designated National Trail. This determination is made during the environmental review process for proposed actions or land use plans.

Again, a sound nature and purposes description is a benchmark the BLM uses to discern whether a proposed activity or plan might interfere in a substantial way or be incompatible – subject, of course, to valid existing rights.

Through the application of the National Trails policy the BLM can make more informed decisions through the NEPA process, including approving, rejecting, denying, prohibiting, minimizing, and/or mitigating projects, and in developing improved goals and objectives for National Trails through the land use planning process.

#### SLIDE 21

Continuing with the key concepts from the Trails Act and FLPMA, let's examine trail corridors. Under the Trails Act, a "National Trail Right-of-Way" must be selected by the Trail Administering agency. "Right-of-Way" in the Trails Act context simply means "trail corridor" – and nothing more. No actual "right" is granted or conveyed. It is not a Title V Right-of-Way as in FLPMA; rather, it is a Right-of-Way, or trail corridor, selected under the authorities of the Trails Act.

Conversely, as an on the ground Trail manager, the BLM must "establish" a National Trail Management Corridor through the BLM land use planning process at the local level, based in part, on the National Trail Right-of-Way selected by the Trail Administering agency – if one exists. Regardless, the BLM has the authority to establish National Trail Management Corridors under FLPMA.

The BLM defines both a "National Trail Right of Way" and a "National Trail Management Corridor" in exactly the same way - as the "area of sufficient width within which to encompass National Trail resources, qualities, values, and associated settings and the primary trail use or uses". Both types of "trail corridors" are based on inventories of the RQVs, associated settings, and the primary trail use or uses.

Note that “selecting” a National Trail Right of Way, again, is an authority reserved only for National Trail Administering agencies, such as the role the BLM plays for the Iditarod, Old Spanish, and El Camino Real National Historic Trails. National Trail ROW selection is not optional. A notice of the map and descriptions must be published in the Federal Register. BLM policy requires that BLM National Trail Administrators select a National Trail Right-of-Way within the statutorily required Comprehensive Plan or through a plan update. This provision ensures the interagency coordination and public involvement occur as envisioned by the Trails Act.

Again, the BLM’s National Trails policy requires the “establishment” of National Trail Management Corridors through the land use planning process. It is a new land use plan allocation decision similar to Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, Recreation Management Areas, or OHV area designations. The BLM considers the National Trail Right-of-Way selected by the Trail Administering agency, in addition to the full spectrum of BLM multiple-use activities. Trail objectives are established, and allowable uses, management actions, and necessary restrictions are developed for the National Trail Management Corridor.

#### SLIDE 22

Lastly, in order to safeguard a National Trail’s Nature and Purposes, it must be identified, determined, and described in both the trailwide Comprehensive Plan and Resource Management Plan; goals and objectives must be established; a National Trail Right-of-Way or National Trail Management Corridor must be selected or established; and guidelines or allowable uses, management actions, and necessary restrictions must be established.

#### SLIDE 23

In review, applicable provisions from the Trails Act, FLPMA, the National Historic Preservation Act and other laws and regulations serve as the basis for the BLM’s National Scenic and Historic Trails policies.

The BLM focuses management attention on the Nature and Purposes for each congressionally designated trail. The Nature and Purposes includes the character, characteristics, and congressional intent for a designated National Trail; the resources, qualities, values, and associated settings; the primary trail use or uses; and activities promoting the preservation of, public access to, travel within, and enjoyment and appreciation of National Trails. The BLM manages congressionally designated trails to safeguard the nature and purposes.

The BLM may permit activities which do not substantially interfere with the nature and purposes, and makes efforts to avoid activities that are incompatible with National Trail purposes.

The National Trail Administrator selects the National Trail Right of Way, and the on the ground BLM trail manager establishes the National Trail Management Corridor. Both the Right of Way and Corridor are defined as the area of sufficient width within which to encompass the RQVs and associated settings and the primary trail use or uses.

Trailwide Comprehensive Plans and RMPs are prepared, updated, or amended to provide management actions to safeguard a National Trail's Nature and Purposes. Within these plans, the Nature and Purposes are described; goals and objectives are developed; a National Trail Right-of-Way or National Trail Management Corridor is selected or established; and guidelines or allowable uses, management actions, and necessary restrictions are determined across a reasonable range of alternatives.

#### SLIDE 24

For the remainder of the presentation, policy requirements will be covered in the National Trail Administration Manual, followed by the National Trails Management Manual. The key concepts from the laws, terms, and responsibilities described previously will be evident.

While the following information is not comprehensive, it does provide some fundamentals which should be helpful in policy study or review.

#### SLIDE 25

BLM Manual 6250 covers National Trail Administration - the special trailwide leadership role that is and can be assigned to the BLM by the Secretary of the Interior when named in the trail enabling legislation. While the National Park Service and U.S. Forest Service also have these roles, the BLM manual applies, of course, only to the BLM for this role.

Again, the BLM serves as the Trailwide Administrator for the Iditarod in Alaska, and the Old Spanish and the El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trails. For the Old Spanish and El Camino Real, the BLM shares the Trail Administration role with the National Park Service.

#### SLIDE 26

While this manual applies directly to 3 BLM States with trailwide responsibility, it also applies indirectly to nearly every field office employee in the Bureau – as a guide to understanding what is required at the trailwide level, and how trailwide responsibilities and decisions relate to daily on the ground actions. Minimum legal requirements can ultimately have a direct effect on both BLM administered trails as well as National Trails on BLM-managed public lands – in the form of protests, appeals, or litigation.

The Statement of Programmatic Policy lines out the most critical elements from the Trails Act – determining the Nature and Purposes of a National Trail; establishing goals and objectives, and selecting the National Trail Right-of-Way from the trailwide perspective.

The Trails Act Section 2 requires trail administrators to encourage and assist tribes, affected agencies, willing landowners, and interested parties in a variety of program areas including planning, development, maintenance, and management. This can include inventory, monitoring, and other facets of trailwide stewardship subject to other laws and regulations.

An emphasis is also placed on trailwide leadership responsibilities and guiding trailwide stewardship activities.

## SLIDE 27

A primary responsibility in Trail Administration is the requirement to develop the Comprehensive Plan for the entire National Trail. Section 5 of the Trails Act details these planning requirements for both National Scenic and National Historic Trails. Manual 6250 provides additional guidance to ensure that key elements of the Trails Act are addressed in the Comprehensive Plan, and to ensure continuity, not conflict, between trail administration and on-the-ground management activities.

For the first time, trailwide policy requirements connect what happens at the trailwide level to what happens on the ground – systematically – using required planning processes as the common denominator.

## SLIDE 28

Manual 6280 – the National Trails Management Manual - covers all of the day to day activities that occur on BLM managed public lands on or near National Scenic or Historic Trails – and for those trails under study or recommended as suitable for such designation. Trail management is the more familiar role to most agency staff and the public.

## SLIDE 29

In this manual, the Statement of Programmatic Policy sets a management standard for trails not yet congressionally designated that are under a National Trail Feasibility Study process, or have been recommended as suitable for congressional designation through such a study.

For land use planning and proposed actions and the associated environmental review processes, the BLM shall consider management actions and alternatives that maintain the values, characteristics, and settings of trails under study and trails recommended as suitable, pursuant to FLPMA. While the Trails Act is silent on any requirements for trails under study or recommended as suitable, the BLM recognizes its fundamental responsibilities under FLPMA and NEPA to manage these trails, and disclose and avoid adverse impacts.

## SLIDE 30

BLM Manual 6280 also sets a management standard for congressionally designated National Scenic and Historic Trails. The management standard for congressionally designated trails should now seem familiar.

## SLIDE 31

The last few slides will address inventory, planning, management, and monitoring more specifically.

The BLM is required to conduct a standardized inventory of the resources, qualities, values, and associated settings and the primary trail use or uses that support the nature and purposes of National Trails. The inventory is used to establish the National Trail Management Corridor through the land use planning process.

Inventory begins with dividing public land areas into inventory analysis units; creating a computer-based viewshed analysis, and is conducted for specific landscape elements and the associated settings, including visual or scenic resources; cultural and historic resources; recreation and travel management; natural resources, including biological, geologic, and scientific; and others that are warranted. Cultural modifications, valid existing rights, and surface ownership are also documented. Research and review of historic journals, diaries, and maps is conducted.

Inventory informs land use planning – and the environmental review of proposed actions – even when a National Trail Management Corridor is not yet established. In these cases, an inventory is conducted within the National Trail viewshed for the Area of Potential Adverse Impact. This will be discussed in more detail later.

The BLM tracks agency performance for inventory and allocates funding for this purpose.

#### SLIDE 32

BLM policy now requires that National Scenic and Historic Trails are addressed through the BLM's Land Use Planning process. A stand-alone section in the resource management plan is now required, due to the cross-cutting, interdisciplinary nature of congressionally designated National Trails.

As soon as practicable after trail designation, the BLM must establish the National Trail Management Corridor through the land use planning process. As discussed, the corridor is a public land area of sufficient width to encompass National Trail resources, qualities, values, and associated settings and the primary use or uses that are present or to be restored. Allowable uses, management actions, and necessary restrictions are determined within the corridor to achieve goals and objectives for the National Trail.

The manual details requirements for public land resources and uses considered across plan alternatives, such as wildlife habitat, grazing, energy development, special use permits, forestry practices, and others. Utility corridors, energy development zones, and exclusion areas for solar, wind, oil and gas, and similar types of use are considered simultaneously with the establishment of the National Trail Management Corridor to ensure that National Trail and energy development objectives are compatible.

The corridor boundary is delineated and tied to associated natural or manmade physical landscape features so as to be identifiable on the ground.

#### SLIDE 33

This slide illustrates BLM land use planning areas overlain with both congressionally designated National Scenic and Historic Trails and trails under study. Over 100 resource management planning areas overlap with congressionally designated National Trails, and there is additional significant overlap with trails under study or recommended as suitable for designation by Congress.

Immediately after the National Trails policy was issued, affected BLM State Offices and the Washington Office began to review draft land use plans for consistency with the new policy. In most cases, sufficient

data was available to proceed in establishing the required National Trail Management Corridors. Formal training of field personnel is, however, still necessary to instill the knowledge and skills required to achieve policy objectives and requirements.

The new policy requires that an annual schedule be prepared detailing RMPs where trails must still be addressed. Field offices should anticipate responding to the request each year.

The policy provides for a Statewide Land Use Plan amendment approach for State Directors interested in preparing for such a process.

#### SLIDE 34

The National Trails policy also covers the day-to-day management of National Trails by the Bureau.

The BLM encourages and assists trail groups, and establishes cooperative relationships, partnerships, and facilitates stakeholder involvement. The policy provides for the development of a National Trail stewardship program and training. The BLM also cooperates and collaborates with Tribes, affected agencies, willing landowners, and interested parties.

Collaborative work under Section 2 of the Trails Act can include planning, development, maintenance, and management of trails where appropriate. Examples of work activities include inventory, monitoring, trail maintenance, and other facets of trailwide stewardship, subject to other laws and regulations. The BLM, volunteers, and nonprofit trail organizations work together at many organizational levels to protect National Trails, and mutually value this long-term relationship.

For day-to-day management, the BLM policy also provides guidelines for various resource programs, including competitive or commercial uses; access opportunities; removal of impediments; wildfire rehabilitation efforts; and other similar considerations.

#### SLIDE 35

For proposed projects or activities that may adversely impact the Nature and Purposes of a National Trail, the BLM invites the National Trail Administrator, the BLM State Office National Trail lead; and a primary National Trail partner organization representative to attend pre-authorization or pre-application meetings to ensure concerns are understood. The BLM considers rejecting applications or denying project approval if the action the BLM is evaluating is clearly inconsistent with the National Trail Nature and Purposes.

To evaluate proposed projects along National Trails, the BLM uses the National Trail Management Corridor established in the RMP as the area of analysis. For proposed projects along National Trails where National Trail Management Corridors have not been established, the BLM determines the "Area of Potential Adverse Impact" or APAI when the project falls within the viewshed of that trail. In these cases, National Trail Inventory must be conducted to determine the APAI to evaluate the level to which the values present could be adversely impacted, and to determine whether the project substantially interferes with the nature and purposes or is incompatible with trail purposes. The analysis considers

existing inventory data, and additional data is gathered as needed to fully analyze potential adverse impacts.

To avoid adverse impact, alternatives are considered which direct the proposed project outside of the Management Corridor or APAI, or to a comparably disturbed or culturally modified area - such as areas already containing transmission lines, pipelines, improved roads, or highways.

When adverse impacts are unavoidable, and/or a project will have adverse impacts, will substantially interfere, or is incompatible, BLM mitigates the impacts to a level commensurate with the adverse impact. Mitigation includes rectifying, reducing, or eliminating the impact over time and/or compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments. The BLM's priorities for mitigation are onsite first; secondly, in the general National Trail region; and lastly within the State where the project is being proposed. Regardless of physical location, mitigation of project impacts must benefit the National Trail and should remain within the National Trail Management Corridor.

When significant adverse impact may result, an internal notification protocol must be followed for any proposed action which may substantially interfere with the nature and purposes, or constitutes an incompatible activity — regardless of whether a National Trail Management Corridor is established in the RMP.

Determinations of substantial interference or incompatible activities are documented in the Decision Record, along with a description of the actions taken and mitigation required.

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Finally, the BLM monitors the conditions of National Trails.

The BLM regularly and systematically monitors trails to determine changes to baseline conditions of National Trail RQVs, the associated settings, and the primary trail use or uses; impacts from RMP implementation and projects; resource uses and surface disturbing activities; acquired lands and easements; and visitor use and capacity.

The agency also monitors the effects of decision implementation, and to identify new and emerging issues.

Coordination of monitoring efforts can occur with trail partners through agreements, and can include training, or limited financial support may be offered to improve stewardship capacity for the National Trails.

All monitoring efforts are documented, and reports are made to the line officer or the BLM Field Manager, of all incidents of substantial interference, activities underway which are incompatible, or any other adverse impacts.

The BLM uses the monitoring data to determine the effectiveness of management decisions and to help determine if management practices should be adjusted.

The BLM tracks monitoring performance and allocates funding to support this activity.

#### SLIDE 37

In review, what does this new policy mean for the Bureau? It means that the Nature and Purposes for National Trails must be considered in all that the agency will do along National Scenic and Historic Trails. It means that the values of trails under study or recommended for designation must also be considered. It means that what happens at the trailwide level, for the BLM, is integrated with what happens at the local level. It means that BLM Resource Management Plans must include National Trail Management Corridors to protect trail values. It also means that the BLM must weigh possible adverse impacts to National Trails very carefully before resource decisions are made in order to protect the Nature and Purposes and values of National Trails. It also means that the Bureau will continue to encourage and assist National Trail partners in sustaining the National Trails System for future generations.

Formal training on the new National Trail System Manuals Series will be delivered through the BLM's National Training Center. The National Trails Manual Series can be found electronically at [www.blm.gov](http://www.blm.gov) in the information center under policies. Thank you for your attention, and the opportunity to share this important new National Trails policy information.