

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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Washington, Jan. 12, 1967

For A.M. Release Jan. 15, 1967

Nationwide System of Trails Recommended to Interior and Agriculture Secretaries:

Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall and Secretary of Agriculture Orville L. Freeman today jointly announced release from the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation of a new report, "Trails for America," which recommends establishment of a nationwide system of metropolitan, park and forest, and long National Scenic Trails.

The report recommends immediate National Scenic Trail status for the Appalachian Trail; early National Scenic Trail status for the Pacific Crest Trail, Potomac Heritage Trail and Continental Divide Trail; and prompt study of other potential long trails. It also urges expansion of State and Federal park and forest trails and development of hiking, bicycling, and horseback trails in and around urban areas.

Based on a study requested by President Johnson in his Natural Beauty Message of February 8, 1965, the Trails report is the latest in a series of significant conservation and recreation policy proposals set forth since establishment of the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation in 1962. Previous recommendations have included establishment of National Recreation Areas and Seashores, and a proposal for a Nationwide System of Scenic or Wild Rivers. A fourth major program -- a study of islands for recreation use -- is now underway.

The Trails report stresses the public demand for a variety of trail activities. "Walking, hiking, and bicycling are simple pleasures within the economic reach of virtually all citizens," the report states. "Horesback riding, even though increasingly expensive for urban dwellers, is available to a large proportion of Americans.

"Opportunities to enjoy these basic activities have become increasingly limited for the American people as the society has urbanized and as economic development has preempted areas which had earlier been devoted to outdoor recreation uses. Today, with more leisure time and with rising amounts of disposable income available for recreation uses, more and more Americans are seeking relaxation and physical and spiritual renewal in the enjoyment of these traditional simple pleasures."

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The report recommends three major categories of trails: National Scenic Trails, Park and Forest Trails, and Metropolitan Area Trails.

National Scenic Trails are described as having natural, scenic or historic qualities that give them recreation potential of national significance. Such trails typically should be several hundred miles in length, have overnight shelters at appropriate intervals, and be interconnected with other major trails that provide opportunity for extended hiking or riding experiences.

Right-of-way should be wide enough to protect the natural and scenic character of land through which trails pass and the historic features along or near the trails.

Four major national scenic trails recommended consist of:

- 1) Appalachian Trail, which extends 2,000 miles from Mt. Katahdin, Maine through 14 States to Springer Mountain, Georgia.
- 2) Pacific Crest Trail, 2,300 miles from the Washington-Canadian Border along the backbone of the Cascade and Sierra Nevada Mountains to the California-Mexico Border.
- 3) Potomac Heritage Trail, 825 miles, from the mouth of the Potomac River to the sources of the river in Pennsylvania and West Virginia, including the 170-mile Chesapeake and Ohio Canal towpath.
- 4) Continental Divide Trail, 3,082 miles, from the Montana-Canadian border in Glacier National Park, through many National Forests and scenic areas in the States of Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, and Colorado, to Silver City, New Mexico.

Five other trails are recommended for detailed study for possible future inclusion in the trail system:

- 1) Lewis and Clark Trail, 4,600 miles from St. Louis, Missouri, to the mouth of the Columbia River, Oregon and Washington, following the route of the Lewis and Clark expedition up the Missouri River, across Lolo Pass in Idaho, and Montana and down the Clearwater, Snake, and Columbia Rivers through Idaho, Oregon and Washington.
- 2) Oregon Trail, 2,000 miles from Independence, Missouri, to the vicinity of Portland, Oregon, through the States of Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, Wyoming, Idaho, and Oregon.
- 3) North Country Trail, 3,170 miles, from the Appalachian Trail in Vermont through New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, to the Lewis and Clark Trail in North Dakota.
- 4) Natchez Trace, 600 miles, from Nashville, Tennessee, to Natchez, Mississippi, following the historic route used by Indians and early settlers.

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5) Santa Fe Trail, 800 miles, from Independence, Missouri, through Kansas, Oklahoma, and Colorado, to Santa Fe, New Mexico.

A number of other trails also are recommended for study:

1) Chisholm Trail, extending from San Antonio, Texas, northerly through Oklahoma, to Abilene, Kansas.

2) Pacific Coast Trail, extending along the more picturesque sections of the Washington-Oregon-California coastline.

3) Upper Colorado River Trail, extending from the Flaming Gorge Recreation Area in Utah and Wyoming, down the Green and Colorado Rivers, to the Glen Canyon Recreation Area in Utah and Arizona, with branches leading into the spectacular side canyons.

4) Rio Grande International Trail, extending along the Rio Grande that forms the United States-Mexican boundary.

5) Mississippi River Trail, paralleling generally the proposed Great River Road.

6) Great Lakes International Trail, circling the more scenic portions of the Great Lakes in the United States and Canada.

7) Ozarks Trail, leading through the picturesque Missouri and Arkansas plateau country with its high scenic ridges and pleasant river valleys.

8) Gulf Seacoast Trail, extending from the southern tip of Florida along the coastline of Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana, to the southern tip of Texas.

9) Atlantic Coast Trail, extending along the more scenic sections of the Atlantic seaboard from Maine to Florida.

10) Daniel Boone Trail, from Cumberland Gap, Kentucky to Nashville, Tennessee.

11) Gold Rush Trail, following one or more of the historic and picturesque routes taken by the early gold seekers in Alaska.

12) Mormon Trail, extending from Nauvoo, Illinois, to Salt Lake City, Utah, through the States of Iowa, Nebraska, and Wyoming.

13) Trail of Tears, beginning in the Southeast and extending to Oklahoma, following the route taken by the exiled Cherokee Indians.

14) De Soto Trail, extending from Tampa Bay, Florida, through the States of Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, and Arkansas, ending at the Mississippi River.

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15) California Trail, extending from the Oregon Trail in Wyoming to the Sacramento Valley in California, through the States of Idaho, Utah, and Nevada.

16) Long Trail, extending from the Massachusetts border northward through Vermont to the Canadian border.

#### Park and Forest Trails

Recommendations are made to expand trail opportunities on State and Federal Park and Forest lands and to establish priority for those areas where population pressure is greatest. Trails in National Parks, Forests, and other Federal areas should also be increased from 88,000 to 125,000 miles, and existing trails upgraded. States administer a reported 14,865 miles of trails and have plans to build an additional 12,278 miles.

#### Metropolitan Area Trails

The report finds the most urgent need for trails is in and near metropolitan areas. It suggests guidelines to assess the number and kind of trails needed to serve urban populations adequately.

In metropolitan areas new trails might be constructed on public utility rights-of-way, abandoned railroad lands, and river and canal banks. Quiet streets lend themselves to hiking or bicycling routes.

Cooperative effort is the key to action. The report urges that ownership, construction, maintenance, and management of trails be shared by the Federal, State, and local agencies, and private organizations and individuals that own or control land along each trail route, and that other private organizations and individuals be invited to assist in furthering the purposes of the trail.

The Trails study served as the basis for an Administration bill to establish a Nationwide System of Trails submitted to the 89th Congress. The bill was introduced in both the Senate and House of Representatives but did not come to hearings.

Secretary Udall and Secretary Freeman are expected to suggest to the 90th Congress similar legislation, based on this report, to support a Nationwide System of Trails. The legislative proposal and this report together will form a blueprint for a comprehensive, long-range program of recreation trail development in the United States.

The Study was conducted by a four-member Steering Committee, representing four Federal agencies, which consisted of: Daniel M. Ogden, Jr., Assistant Director for Planning and Research, Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, Department of the Interior, Chairman; Hamilton K. Pyles, Deputy Chief, Forest Service, Department of Agriculture; Theodor R. Swem, Assistant Director, Cooperative Activities, National Park Service, Department of the Interior; and Eldon F. Holmes, Chief, Recreation Staff, Bureau of Land Management, Department of the Interior.

"Trails for America" is on sale at the Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20401 for \$2.25.

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