

July 26, 2005

STATEMENT BY GARY WERNER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
PARTNERSHIP FOR THE NATIONAL TRAILS SYSTEM
ON
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL TRAILS SYSTEM ACT

Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee on National Parks:

The National Trails System Act was and is a visionary, challenging, and innovative work of Congress. The Act was and is **visionary** in its intent to encourage development of trails throughout the country and in its provision of several approaches, authorities, and resources to enable the trails to happen. Further, the intent of the Act was and is to foster a system of trails, not just a random collection of them. To make a system out of a collection requires coordination and guidance from an overarching authority – the Federal government. Despite nearly 40 years of dedicated effort we have yet to realize the full promise of the National Trails System Act and we have not yet fashioned a mature National Trails System from the many trails established under the authorities of the Act.

Nearly 40 years after its enactment, the National Trails System Act has spawned 8 national scenic trails, 16 national historic trails, more than 800 national recreation trails, and several side or connecting trails. The national scenic and historic trails span more than 40,000 miles and enter into or cross 47 states. Only two of the national scenic trails are completely open for end-to-end off-road travel by hikers or equestrians. None of the national historic trails is completely operating for visitor use. These trails function in some ways as a system; in many ways they are not yet a system. There are gaps in the National Trails System and there are several gaps in the National Trails System Act.

The National Trails System Act is **challenging** in its expectation that Federal agencies from several departments of the government should routinely collaborate to administer and manage public resources of a vastly extensive scale and should share that work in long-term partnerships with State and local agencies and citizen organizations. The Act assumes and the National Trails System it has spawned is predicated on these enduring public/private partnerships as the motivating principle of a “Culture of Collaborative Conservation.”

The National Trails System Act is **innovative** in encouraging and supporting citizen led stewardship of major components of our cultural and natural heritage for public enjoyment and education. Several key provisions of the Act foster local, grass-roots stewardship of these nationally significant resources. The national scenic and historic trails quite simply would not exist without the active stewardship of tens of thousands of citizens throughout America.

Affiliate Members:

American Discovery Trail Society
Arizona Trail Association
Back Country Horsemen Association
National Frontier Trails Museum
Pacific Northwest Trail Association

National Scenic Trail Organizations:
American Hiking Society

Appalachian Trail Conference
Continental Divide Trail Alliance
Continental Divide Trail Society
Florida Trail Association
Ice Age Park & Trail Foundation
North Country Trail Association
Pacific Crest Trail Association
Potomac Heritage Trail Association

National Historic Trail Organizations

E Mau Na Ala Hele
Anza Trail Coalition of Arizona
Heritage Trails
Camino Real Trail Association
Iditarod National Historic Trail, Inc.

Lewis & Clark Trail Heritage Foundation
Mormon Trails Association

Nez Perce Trail Foundation
National Pony Express Association
Old Spanish Trail Association
Oregon California Trails Association
Overmountain Victory Trail Association
Santa Fe Trail Association

Trail of Tears Association

The Partnership for the National Trails System is a non-profit federation of 28 citizen organizations with 70,000 members that directly support and help manage national scenic and historic trails in partnership with the National Park Service, USDA Forest Service, and the Bureau of Land Management.

Tales of the Culture of Collaborative Conservation

From Damascus, Virginia to Rib Lake, Wisconsin to Agua Dulce, California whole communities have embraced the national scenic and historic trails. Some, like these three hold annual weekend to week-long festivals celebrating the trails. Others, like Casper, Wyoming and Baker City, Oregon host major interpretive centers providing information for travelers following the trails. Many more provide routine services for the tourists who use the scenic or historic trails in their vicinity.

Dayton, Ohio, Madison, Wisconsin, Kansas City, Missouri, and Tucson, Arizona are among the cities that have used national scenic or historic trails to form the backbone of community park and trail systems. In metropolitan Kansas City, for example, the starting point for the Santa Fe, Oregon, and California National Historic Trails, land has been purchased from private landowners to provide public recreation opportunities along with preserving and interpreting the trail resource on the property. One of these projects is Schumacher Park, donated by Lou Schumacher, who researched and promoted the trail route across that property. A Challenge Cost Share Project with the National Park Service has provided several interpretive exhibits, a shelter, a DAR Santa Fe Trail marker and other amenities. Other projects involved the preservation of the famous Lone Elm Campground by the City of Olathe and the Three Trails Crossing Corridor - a series of interpretation projects, hiking and biking trails and silhouettes along the Independence Route of the three trails, which will eventually be a ten-mile long segment of the Metro Green Hiking-Biking trail system that will course throughout the metropolitan Kansas City area. Private owners have either sold or granted easements across their property to enable this very ambitious corridor project to advance.

More than half of the 40,000 plus miles of national scenic and historic trails lie across private land. For instance, 40% of the Oregon, California, and Pony Express National Historic Trails and some 2200 miles of the North Country National Scenic Trail route alone -- the length of the entire Appalachian National Scenic Trail -- are on private land.

All across America private landowners have adopted sections of the national scenic and historic trails crossing their lands. They are the stewards and protectors of important pieces of our cultural, historic, and natural heritage. For many it is part of their family heritage to do so. They have voluntarily opened their land to allow the public to enjoy the history, scenery, and beauty of the special places they cherish along the trails.

The sentiment expressed by Ross Turner, who has hosted a much-used ½ mile section of the Ice Age National Scenic Trail near Hartman Creek State Park in Waupaca County, Wisconsin for many years, is typical of landowners' along the scenic and historic trails:

"For us, having the Ice Age Trail on our land has been tremendous from beginning to end. The volunteers do such a nice job - they make it like a park. The people who use the Trail appreciate the land and the solitude. They come to listen to the birds. We meet so many nice people who are just starting or finishing their walks. It has just been all positives for us."

Mr. Turner sold property for the Ice Age Trail to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources in 2002.

The scenic and historic trail organizations in the Partnership continually work with private landowners and local units of government to help nurture a culture of collaboration along the trails. For instance, the Oregon-California Trails Association (OCTA) has annually given "Friend of the Trail" awards to recognize landowners and businesses, who have been outstanding partners in helping to preserve and share important trail sites with the public. Since 1985 OCTA has presented these awards to 55 individuals, families, and business owners in 10 different states (including one in New Mexico in 1995)

Ken Martin, a member of OCTA's Kanza Chapter in northeast Kansas works with 123 private landowners in Kansas and another 30 in southeast Nebraska who have portions of the Oregon, California, and/or Pony Express National Historic Trails on their property. There is friendly competition among them over who has the best remnant, creek crossing, grave-site, etc. 2007 will be the centennial of Pottawatomie County, Kansas, and these landowners have asked Ken to lead a 2007 wagon train ride over their part of the Oregon and California Trails. Private landowners will participate and will open their lands to this wagon train, as has been done elsewhere along the trails in Kansas and Nebraska for wagon trains lead by Ken for a number of years.

In June, the National Pony Express Association (NPEA) held their annual re-ride of the Pony Express National Historic Trail from St. Joseph, Missouri to Sacramento, California. Over 90 percent of the re-ride is over the actual route used by Pony Express riders in 1861 thanks to private landowners permission. Several years ago, one private landowner agreed to the re-ride over his land, but only if the NPEA would tell him when the pony express rider would cross his land. The NPEA did and when the pony express rider crossed that land at 2:30 AM, three generations of the private land owner's family proudly watched the event.

During this year's NPEA re-ride of the Pony Express trail, Ken Martin rode into Guittard's Station in the dark and found that the entire town of Beatty, Kansas, had turned out to greet him.

The trail organizations also work with many businesses to garner help in providing trail rights-of-way and in protecting historic sites along the trails. For instance, the Ice Age Park & Trail Foundation has worked with several real estate developers in Waukesha and Dane Counties to secure critical links in the Ice Age National Scenic Trail. In each case the developer helped provide a corridor for the Trail to pass through and designed the housing development to provide ready access to the Trail. In each case the developers have reported that the lots adjoining the Ice Age Trail corridor sold first and at a higher price than other lots in the subdivision. Veridean Homes in Madison further aided the trailmaking effort by paying for a one-year membership in the Foundation for each of the new homeowners in the subdivision.

Similarly the Oregon-California Trails Association has worked successfully for many years with businesses in the energy industry to protect key segments of their several national historic trails. In 1985, OCTA members worked with EXXON to minimize the number of times a proposed pipeline would cross the Oregon National Historic Trail near South Pass. EXXON modified their proposed route to cross the trail only once and later wrote this up in their corporate magazine as an example of good neighbor cooperation to protect this landmark.

In March 2001, representatives of Wolverine Oil met with the Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Wyoming State Historic Preservation Officer and OCTA to discuss plans to drill exploratory wells on Federal land leases near the Sandy Crossing and South Pass. The Wolverine President proposed that on sites where drilling would be detrimental to the Oregon, California, Mormon Pioneer and Pony Express National Historic Trails, they could drill laterally and still be at least 1/4 mile from the trail as required by the BLM. They successfully drilled wells on several sites following the BLM requirements and providing another example of cooperative multiple-use of public lands.

Anadarko Petroleum is using trail location information provided by OCTA's Preservation Officer to site gas wells and pipelines while minimizing the impact on the historic Cherokee Trail in Wyoming.

During the 108th Congress, staff from the Senate Energy Committee asked the Oregon-California Trails Association to work with the energy industry and the Bureau of Land Management in Wyoming to minimize difficulties in protecting Trail resources while siting oil and gas facilities. To date, the OCTA Preservation Officer has reviewed over 600 energy permit applications affecting the trails corridor and none of those applications has been delayed by OCTA. A few permit applications have been delayed by the Bureau of Land Management or the State Historic Preservation Officer over mitigation concerns or because the site violates the Bureau's rule of no activity within 1/4 mile of either side of the trail.

Another example of help from the business community is the LaFarge Cement Company, one of the largest cement manufacturing companies in the world in Sugar Creek, Missouri. The company owns a bluff adjacent to Independence, Missouri that overlooks the old Wayne City Landing area and the Missouri River. The managers of that plant have always allowed the public to come onto their property for historic tours. They have initiated an improvement project with a Challenge Cost Share Project agreement with the National Park Service to create a much larger and finished park at the overlook with a series of interpretive exhibits. They have pledged \$50,000 to pay for the construction as their part of the match. It will be an ongoing partnership for the foreseeable future.

Partnerships between private citizen organizations and public agencies have been a hallmark of the National Trails System since its inception. These partnerships provide a way to enlist private financial support for public projects, usually resulting in a greater than equal match of funds. The commitment of the private trail organizations toward sustaining the national scenic and historic trails continues to grow. In **2004 the trail organizations channeled 668,996 hours** of documented volunteer labor valued at **\$11,801,091** to help sustain these trails. This is a **3% increase** over the volunteer labor reported for 2003. The trail organizations also directly applied **private sector contributions of \$6,449,719** to benefit the trails.

For Fiscal Year 2004 Congress appropriated **\$20,822,000** for challenge cost share projects and for operations and maintenance of the National Trails System by the National Park Service, USDA Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management. The private sector contribution of **\$18,250,810** is a comparable match to the Federal contribution to the National Trails System. The attached chart lists the contributions reported by the various trail organizations for 2004.

For the 10 years from 1995 through 2004 the private trail organizations coordinated tens of thousands of citizen volunteers who collectively contributed at least **5,529,893 hours** valued at **\$80,274,113** to help develop and sustain the national scenic and historic trails. The trail organizations contributed an additional **\$54,842,556** during that 10-year span for a total contribution of **\$135,116,669**. (See attached chart for details)

The culture and spirit of volunteerism for public benefit runs deep and strong throughout the organizations within the National Trails System family. The Appalachian Trail Conservancy, the oldest and largest of the National Trails System collaborating organizations, has a number of volunteers who have been contributing their “sweat equity” to sustaining the Appalachian National Scenic Trail for more than 50 years. The four hurricanes that blew across Florida in the summer and fall of 2004 uprooted enough trees to effectively close 800 miles of the Florida National Scenic Trail. Working closely with the USDA-Forest Service, members of the Florida Trail Association (FTA) and “hot shot” crews from the West had the entire Florida Trail open again before the end of the year. One FTA member, who lost his house during one of the hurricanes, worked for several weeks to clear storm damage from the Trail before turning to the task of re-building his home.

The hours contributed by volunteers reported above and in the accompanying charts are but one measure of the roles played by the volunteers and staffs of the partner trail organizations in sustaining our national scenic and historic trails. These volunteers and staff each year:

- build and maintain thousands of miles of trail for hikers, skiers, and equestrians to use;
- work to eradicate dozens of invasive species that are threatening the native plants along the trails just as much as they are in national parks and wildlife refuges;
- help protect and restore rare native ecosystems along the trails;
- organize and host educational conferences and skill training workshops;
- develop maps, interpretive materials, and exhibits;
- lead interpretive tours on both historic and scenic trails;
- scout and map – often using GIS technology – historic routes and scenic trail relocations;

Besides sponsoring annual or biennial conferences, many of the partner trail organizations support scholarly research of aspects of their trails through monetary grants and by publishing scholarly journals. One example of these contributions to the heritage of the National Trails System is the Oregon-California Trails Association’s “Census of Emigrant Documents (COED). OCTA has compiled and copyrighted an Emigrant Names CD database of approximately 66,000 names of emigrants to the west between 1832 and 1899. COED is based upon 2,263 diaries, journals, letters and reminiscences by pioneers researched by more than 200 volunteers working over 15 years who collectively contributed more than 100,000 hours to this project. Using this CD, researchers can search for a specific name during a time period and find information about the primary documents and their location.

Another multi-year project has produced a Natural Heritage Inventory for the entire 2,200 mile long Appalachian Trail. A companion Cultural Resource Inventory of the A.T. is now underway.

Education of trail users about the cultural and historical significance of the national historic trails and about the natural heritage along the national scenic trails is a major undertaking for many of the partner trail organizations. These educational efforts take many creative approaches. Here are several examples:

The Lewis & Clark Trail Heritage Foundation (L&CTHF) has developed and distributed a detailed and comprehensive curriculum guide for use by primary and secondary school teachers in telling the many stories encompassed within the Journey of the Corps of Discovery and the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. To further this outreach to children the L&CTHF sponsors “Kid’s Camps” as a regular part of its annual convention, with special activities and field trips tailored toward the interests of younger folks.

In like way the Nez Perce Trail Foundation and the USDA-Forest Service have partnered with the Appaloosa Horse Club to pass along to the youth of the Nez Perce people their rich heritage of “horse culture.” Annual rides on sections of the Nez Perce National Historic Trail are a key component of this effort providing memorable experiences for young people at an impressionable time of their lives.

Several of the educational activities along the national historic trails are in the realm of “living history.” The annual re-ride of the Pony Express National Historic Trail by members of the National Pony Express Association is one example of this kind of activity. Another is the Re-enactment of the Campaign for Kings Mountain. For nearly 30 years members of the Overmountain Victory Trail Association (OVTA), dressed in period clothing and with period tools, have retraced the several hundred mile, two week march of the “Overmountain Men” to the Battle of Kings Mountain – the turning point of the Revolutionary War in the south in 1780. Each fall OVTA members authentically retrace the route followed by the citizen-soldiers to Kings Mountain and in the communities along the way they re-enact episodes from that journey for school children and interested citizens. Their message is riveting and compelling; at least one young boy raced home after one such session at school and told his mother to pack him a sandwich, because he had to leave to help fight the British!

Several of the national historic trails cross our borders as just part of longer international trails. Leaders from Camino Real de Tierra Adentro Trail Association (CARTA) in New Mexico and of the Anza Trail Coalition in Arizona have several times, working with their Park Service and Bureau of Land Management partners, organized international symposiums with colleagues in Mexico. These meetings have deepened the appreciation of the shared Hispanic Culture on both sides of the border, led to efforts to better mark these trails in Mexico, and to promote tourists from both countries to travel El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro and Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trails.

CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING THE NATIONAL TRAILS SYSTEM

Two major constraints complicate the ability of the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, and USDA-Forest Service to effectively administer and manage the national scenic and historic trails. One of these is fiscal; the other is organizational/structural.

Budgetary Constraints

For Fiscal Year 2004 Congress appropriated **\$20,822,000** for challenge cost share projects and for operations and maintenance of the National Trails System by the National Park Service, USDA Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management. Each of the three agencies manages its budget differently from the others. The Park Service budget is structured to fund the operation of places and each of the national scenic and historic trails that it administers has a line item operating budget. The Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service budgets are structured to fund programs or activities rather than places.

Despite this difference, we have been able to convince your colleagues on the Interior Appropriations Subcommittee that the scenic and historic trails administered and managed by the Bureau and the Forest Service need budgetary recognition similar to that given to the trails administered by the Park Service. The Congressional appropriations provide accountable funding for all the national scenic and historic trails administered and managed by each of the three agencies. With budgetary recognition established two other impediments to adequate and effective funding still loom.

First is the amount of funding provided. While **\$20,822,000** may seem like a substantial amount of money to support these trails, it really is not much money for a 40,000 mile, continent spanning system of trails. One of the main challenges in operating the trails is maintaining good coordination and communication among all of the responsible parties. To do so requires a great deal of travel and many meetings. Travel money is short among all three agencies. An annual appropriation of **\$28 – 30 million** would provide a more adequate base for the 24 national scenic and historic trails.

Second is coordination of budgets among the three agencies and easy transfer of money among them. All three agencies manage significant components of most of the national scenic and historic trails in the West. Many projects along these trails require collaboration among two or three of them. If one or more of the agencies does not receive funding to support the projects frequently they cannot be done, unless funds can be transferred among the agencies. This has proven to be very difficult to do in most situations.

To try to remedy this problem the Partnership has encouraged our Federal partners to do coordinated budgeting. This practice requires getting people from all the pertinent jurisdictions along a given trail together to identify, with their non-profit organization partner, all the projects, activities, and programs ready to be done along the trail. These must be ranked by priority and a plan of action agreed upon by all of the parties. Needless to say, this can be a very complicated and time-consuming process for a several thousand mile-long trail. However, for most effective

progress toward fully implementing the scenic or historic trail it is an absolutely essential way to do business.

Structural/Organizational Constraints

The three agencies charged with administering the national scenic and historic trails have very different missions, each has its own organizational culture, and they operate in two different departments of the Federal government. All of these characteristics present challenges toward forging the “culture of collaborative conservation” necessary to successfully administer and manage these long-distance trails. Despite these obstacles significant progress has been made toward developing that collaborative culture among the agencies.

One of the tools that has been used to help foster better collaboration among the three agencies is a Memorandum of Understanding, now in its 5th year that also includes the Federal Highway Administration. Among the accomplishments brought about under the MOU is a set of Interagency Trail Data Standards to be used by all the agencies in tracking work being done on and the condition of all of the trails. Use of these Trail Data Standards should enable the agencies to provide better reports to Congress on the status of each of the scenic and historic trails.

The Trail Data Standards are designed to be used as part of comprehensive Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for each of the scenic and historic trails. The agencies are attempting to standardize the structure of these GIS but the two departments, Interior and Agriculture, are using different software systems that make ready correlation and translation of data difficult. The goal, with a plan developed by the National Park Service in collaboration with the other two agencies, is to develop a unified GIS for the entire National Trails System so that data, information, and maps can be readily shared from trail to trail throughout the System. In 2002 the estimated cost to implement this GIS over a 5-year period was about \$8 million.

Work has gone on developing individual GIS for many of the scenic and historic trails with only minor regard for assuring the compatibility and transferability of the information stored in each one. Lack of a unified approach is one of the factors hindering administration of the National Trails System as a true system rather than as a collection of trails.

GAPS IN THE SYSTEM– GAPS IN THE ACT

Gaps in the Act – Inconsistent Land Acquisition Authority

There is a gross disparity and inconsistency in the National Trails System Act regarding Federal land acquisition authority for the national scenic and historic trails. While Congress created the Act in 1968 to foster and sustain a nationwide system of trails with a full array of authority necessary for Federal agencies to administer them, nine scenic or historic trails have been authorized without any Federal land acquisition authority. These nine trails are the Oregon, Mormon Pioneer, Lewis and Clark, Iditarod and Nez Perce National Historic Trails and the Continental Divide, Ice Age, North Country and Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trails.

Federal administering agencies lack the fundamental and often essential means for protecting the integrity of the resources and the continuity of the footpaths for more than one-third of the National Trails System, while Congress has provided those agencies with such willing seller or greater land acquisition authority for the rest of the System, including El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail authorized in 2004.

This inconsistency of land acquisition authority severely hampers appropriate administration of more than one-third of the National Trails System. Perhaps the most striking example of this inconsistency and disparity is the four national historic trails administered by the National Park Service in Salt Lake City, Utah. Currently the Park Service has authority to buy land from willing sellers along the California and Pony Express National Historic Trails, but is prohibited from doing so along the Oregon and Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trails.

This inconsistency seems highly ironic since the four trails share the same route across most of Nebraska, Wyoming and Utah. If a landowner offers to sell land to the Federal government containing historic traces of these four trails it is unclear what authority the Park Service has to act upon. With authority to buy land for two of the trails but not for the other two, would the conflicting authorities cancel each other or would the land be able to be purchased for the two trails and the other two left unrecognized on the site? Perhaps this is an odd situation, but it illustrates a peculiar and frustrating inconsistency in the Trails Act with important consequences for the day-to-day management and protection of these trails.

There is real need for Federal agencies to be able to help protect the resources and continuity of these trails by acquiring land from willing sellers. Of the three trails in the eastern half of the country, the **Ice Age, North Country and Potomac Heritage Trails**, which lie primarily across private land, **slightly more than one-third, about 2421 miles**, of their projected 6115 mile length **is permanently protected for public use**. The other national scenic trail without Federal land acquisition authority, the Continental Divide Trail, mostly crosses public land and is nearly complete. Only about 113 miles of right-of-way for the Continental Divide Trail remain to be acquired. In total these four national scenic trails are projected to be more than 9300 miles long when completed, yet 25 years after their authorization only about 5500 miles, slightly more than half their length, are permanently protected for public benefit. **Without the ability for Federal agencies to purchase permanent rights-of-way from willing sellers it is unlikely that these trails will ever be the continuous pathways intended by Congress.**

The degree of protection of the five national historic trails without Federal land acquisition authority is comparable to the condition of the four national scenic trails. **Only 194 of the 730 significant sites and segments** documented to date along the Oregon, Mormon Pioneer, Lewis and Clark, Nez Perce and Iditarod National Historic Trails **are permanently protected**. This amounts to **only 26%** of the recognized places along these trails that can provide visitors first hand experience of where important events of our Nation's history occurred. The attached table documents the degree of protection of the resources and rights-of-way for each of the nine trails without Federal land acquisition authority.

Providing willing seller land acquisition authority for the six national scenic and historic trails in the West without it will have little potential impact on the amount of land owned by the Federal

government. More than 95% of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail is already on public land. Federal land acquisition for the national historic trails is limited by Section 7(a)(2)(g) of the National Trails System Act to the identified “high potential sites and segments”: *“For national historic trails, direct Federal acquisition for trail purposes shall be limited to those areas indicated by the study report or by the comprehensive plan as high potential route segments or high potential historic sites.”* These “high potential sites and segments” are very specific, documented locations along these trails.

The need and opportunity to use willing seller land acquisition authority will arise at different times for the various trails. For some, the authority may not be used for many years or only infrequently. For others the need for this authority is more acute and it is likely to be used as soon as Congress makes it available and to be used often. Although the National Park Service has had authority to buy land from willing sellers for more than a decade for the California and Pony Express National Historic Trails, no land has been purchased to protect sites along these trails. On the other hand, there is a very urgent need for the National Park Service to join State and local agencies and private land trusts in buying land to provide continuous rights-of-way for the Ice Age and North Country National Scenic Trails.

Without the ability for Federal agencies to acquire sites and segments along these nine trails from willing sellers, irreplaceable resources and experiences of our Nation’s heritage will be lost forever. Each year willing sellers offer for sale many parcels along critical segments of these trails.

The State of Wisconsin and several counties have spent more than \$14 million in purchasing land for the Ice Age Trail over the past decade. More than 40 willing sellers have sold their parcels of land, ranging in size from 5 acres to 441 acres, for the Ice Age Trail. Negotiations are underway with more than a dozen additional willing sellers. State and county land agents have mostly been responding to landowners who have contacted them offering to sell their land. Dealing with these offers from willing sellers has left little time to contact others of the hundreds of landowners along the Ice Age Trail about their interest in selling land.

Bills to provide willing seller land acquisition authority – identical to that provided for the other scenic and historic trails -- for the nine “orphan trails” have been passed twice by the House and once by the Senate in three Congress’. HR 2332 providing this authority awaits action by the National Parks Subcommittee.

Gaps in the System – Incomplete National Historic Trails

Several of the national historic trails as authorized by Congress reflect only part of the routes that were historically used by those traveling the trails. The Trail of Tears, Oregon, California, Mormon Pioneer, and Pony Express National Historic Trails as authorized do not convey the full history of their use during significant episodes in our Nation’s history.

Considerable research, much of it done by volunteers of the Oregon-California Trails Association, Mormon Trails Association and National Pony Express Association, has documented important routes and cutoffs used by the 19th Century travelers of these trails that

were not recognized in the original feasibility studies. Although those feasibility studies and the authorization as national historic trails by Congress based upon them recognized the main routes of the four trails, many of the “feeder trails” at the eastern ends and “dispersal routes” at the western ends of them were not recognized. To preserve to the fullest extent all the historic and cultural resources associated with these important routes of development of the United States and to present the richness of their stories as completely as possible, it is essential and right that the National Park Service should be authorized to evaluate all their routes and cutoffs for possible inclusion in the National Trails System.

Additional routes and cutoffs proposed for study include one to the Whitman Mission in Washington State. This first pioneer route to the northwest was bypassed in the 1840s by trails along the Oregon side of the Columbia River. In southern Oregon the Applegate-Lassen route is marked officially as part of the California Trail, even in front of the Oregon state house in Salem, and also should be identified as an important southern route for the Oregon Trail. An Idaho alternative route leads to Boise but has never been identified as part of the Oregon Trail. Additional routes and cutoffs in northern California also await study and recognition.

Several important “main routes” were not included in the original feasibility studies. The Cherokee Trail, for instance, from Fort Smith, Arkansas through Colorado was heavily used by Native Americans and others heading west to the gold fields. It divides into two segments in Wyoming that rejoin and connect with the California Trail at Fort Bridger. Although marked by the BLM with OCTA help, it should also be designated as part of the California Trail. In Wyoming during the 1860s, the route of the Mormon Out-and-Back covered wagons took pioneers from Rawlins, Wyoming, the end of the railroad line then under construction, to Salt Lake City. This route is already authorized as part of the California Trail, but also should carry the Mormon Pioneer Trail logo. Throughout the Missouri Valley and along the Platte River Route, other sections of historic pioneer trails exist, including a segment of the Pony Express that should be added. All these routes need further study by the National Park Service, as recommended in the Four Trails Comprehensive Management Plan, to determine if their contributions to American history justify their addition to the National Trails System.

The understanding of our history and the diverse cultures it has produced is not static. Rather, like a living organism it is dynamic and grows with new discoveries and re-interpretations of previous information. As a Nation we are much richer and stronger because of such advances in the understanding of our history that enable us to more fully appreciate both the contributions of the many peoples and cultures that have inhabited our land before us and the injustices brought upon them through ignorance, prejudice and greed.

Our National Trails System should be in the forefront of recognizing the full stories of our past, as we are best able to understand them and to preserve the physical reminders of those stories to the fullest extent possible.

Both the House and the Senate have passed bills authorizing a Feasibility Study of the additional routes for the four Emigrant Trails in previous Congress’ and S. 54, authorizing the study, has been passed by the Senate. The bill awaits action by the National Parks Subcommittee.

HR. 3085, authorizing a Feasibility Study of additional routes for the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail, awaits action by the National Parks Subcommittee.

Gaps in the System – Missing Links Among National Scenic Trails

Of the eight national scenic trails three – Appalachian, Continental Divide, and Pacific Crest – follow the ridges of the Nation’s great mountain ranges. Two – Ice Age and North Country – traverse the eastern hardwood forests of the Great Lakes Region and skirt the edges of the Midwestern prairie. The Florida Trail traverses the subtropical forests of Florida and the Potomac Heritage Trail follows the banks of one of our most important rivers. The few pieces of the Natchez Trace Trail that exist are remnants of the historic Natchez Trace.

While these are all magnificent trails they do not begin to provide the full range of experience of all the topographic regions and ecosystems of the United States. For instance, missing are opportunities to walk among the great canyons and Sonoran Desert of the Southwest, or within the rain forest of the Pacific Northwest, or across the sweep of the Great Plains, or along one of our ocean coasts. Several existing trails, like the Arizona and Pacific Northwest Trails, could readily fill some of those gaps.

The Pacific Crest and Continental Divide National Scenic Trails provide opportunities to walk across the United States from the Canadian border to the Mexican border. To mirror that opportunity in the East consideration should be given to linking the Appalachian and Florida National Scenic Trails and to extending the Appalachian Trail to the Canadian border. Similar consideration should be given to linking the North Country National Scenic Trail across North Dakota and Montana to the Pacific Northwest National Recreation Trail. This linkage would provide a way to walk east and west across the United States and would be a fitting complement to the three north-south scenic trails.

Adjustments also need to be made from time to time in the routes of the authorized national scenic trails. The National Park Service has worked with local communities, trail organizations, and Minnesota’s Congressional delegation on a proposed re-location of a significant section of the North Country National Scenic Trail. The proposal would re-locate the North Country Trail, as yet un-built, to several existing trails along the north shore of Lake Superior and near the Canadian border.

HR 1250, authorizing a Feasibility Study of an Arizona National Scenic Trail, awaits action by the National Parks Subcommittee.

Gaps in the System – Gaps in the Act – Long-Distance Trails Linking Communities

The National Trails System Act as a statement of policy asserts that “...*trails should be established (i) primarily, near the urban areas of the Nation, and (ii) secondarily, within scenic areas and along historic travel routes of the Nation which are often remotely located.*” Section 2. (a) The authorized national scenic and historic trails mostly fulfill the second purpose of the Act. Missing is a category of trail and a system of authorized trails to implement the first purpose of the Act to “*establish trails near the urban areas of the Nation...*”

Congress could readily rectify this gap in the Trails Act and the Trails System by establishing a new category of Congressionally authorized trails for various non-motorized recreational uses that would specifically link together the major *urban areas of the Nation*. Several existing trails or trails under construction – East Cost Greenway, American Discovery Trail, Mississippi River Trail, Great Western Trail -- should be likely candidates for this new trail Category.

The above-mentioned trails are examples, similar to the national scenic trails, of citizen driven initiatives to create longer routes and link together trails into a larger, coherent system of trails, analogous and complementary to the Nation's highway system. The value of these linkages – of one community to another, then another, then another – is more in the series of unbroken local linkages than in the prospect of a way to make a cross-country journey. Many times more regional journeys will be made on this linked system than will trans-continental journeys be made, but the knowledge of the links will transform the way recreationists see the geography of our Nation.

No longer can we afford to view recreation as an amenity – a nice frill, but no necessity for modern life. Indeed, since we have systematically removed almost all activities that require physical exertion from our daily lives of work, it falls to our opportunities for recreation to provide the strenuous physical activity that doctors and scientists are now re-discovering, is so essential for our physical and mental health. Understood this way, the National Trails System, if it is nurtured to fully flower, to actually link major communities to places of inspiration and solace, will be one of the main physical components of a program to restore the health of our Nation. How better to fight the epidemic of childhood obesity than to get children out on trails moving through the landscape powered by their own muscles?

The Senate has several times passed bills establishing a new category of trail – national discovery trails – and authorizing the American Discovery Trail as the first such trail. HR. 690, establishing the new trail category and authorizing the American Discovery Trail, awaits action by the National Parks Subcommittee.

The Partnership for the National Trails System requests the National Parks Subcommittee to **promptly act favorably and recommend passage** of the following bills to the House of Representatives:

- **HR 2332, providing willing seller land acquisition authority for nine national scenic and historic trails.**
- **S. 54, authorizing a Feasibility Study of additional routes for the four Emigrant Trails.**
- **HR. 3085, authorizing a Feasibility Study of additional routes for the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail.**
- **HR 1250, authorizing a Feasibility Study of an Arizona National Scenic Trail.**
- **HR. 690, establishing the new national discovery trail category and authorizing the American Discovery Trail.**

The Partnership for the National Trails System appreciates the opportunity to provide these comments for the hearing record.

**OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION
FRIEND OF THE TRAIL AWARDEES**

1985: Stella Hammett (Kansas), Ivor Dilke (Nebraska), Rudy & Ruth Chesnovar (Wyoming) and Homer & Kay Abell (Oregon)
1986: Dwight Ewing (Nebraska), Marvis Applequist (Wyoming)
1987: Bernard Sun (Wyoming), Robert Ward (Idaho), Mr. & Mrs. David Bagley (Utah) and George Dein (Nebraska)
1988: Donald Willsey (Kansas), Krebs Ranches (Oregon), Chester & Bill Frederick (Wyoming)
1989: Paul & Ruby Tschirky (California), Herb & Mary Allen (Idaho), Neal & Leona Ambrose (Idaho), Bill & Edna Barber (Wyoming) and Jim & Betty Setback (Kansas)
1990: Don & Jean Railed (Oregon), Louis Schumacher (Missouri)
1991: Ray Bedke (Idaho)
1992: James Gould (California), Mr. & Mrs. Leonard Osler Family (Nebraska), Freed-Robinson Partners (Utah) and John & Leonard Hay Families (Wyoming)
1993: Lyle & Carol Woodbury (Idaho), Steve & Susan Cory (Oregon), Peter & Jeanne Maher (Wyoming) and Wayne & Mae Koch (Nebraska)
1994: Les Broadie (Idaho), Mr. & Mrs. David Gage (Kansas), Mr. & Mrs. John Gage (Kansas), Joseph Ray Broadbent, Jr. (Wyoming), and Joseph Siddoway Broadbent (Wyoming)
1995: Steve Percy (Idaho), Joe & Dianne Jeffrey (Nebraska), Pete & Faye Gaines (New Mexico), and Edwin Boddye Family (Nebraska)
1996: Maggie Creek Ranches (Nevada) and Vernon Bomgardner (Wyoming)
1997: Gerald & Patricia Mick (Nebraska)
1998: Rachael Huninghake (Kansas) and Gerald Swaggart (Oregon)
1999: Marian Scott Bradley (Kansas) and William Thompson Family (California)
2000: Marc & Helen Vering (Kansas)
2001: Norman & Gaynell Park (Wyoming), Elvin & Shirley Holle (Kansas) and Audubon Spring Creek Prairie (Nebraska)
2002: Art & Lorene Pacha (Kansas)
2003: Jim Tessendorf (Kansas) and Pat & Alicia Keegan (Kansas)
2004: Rex & Loleta Morton (Kansas), William Johnson (Oregon) and Larry & Corrine Lindsay (Oregon)

**CONTRIBUTIONS MADE IN 2004
TO SUPPORT THE NATIONAL TRAILS SYSTEM
BY NATIONAL SCENIC AND HISTORIC TRAIL ORGANIZATIONS**

ORGANIZATION	VOLUNTEER HOURS	ESTIMATED VALUE OF VOLUNTEER LABOR	FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS
Appalachian Trail Conference	174,902	\$3,085,271	\$3,099,000
Camino Real Trail Association	3,230	\$56,977	\$1,000*
Continental Divide Trail Society	1,500*	\$26,460	
Continental Divide Trail Alliance	21,700	\$382,788	\$592,948
Florida Trail Association	60,000*	\$1,058,400	\$165,000
Ice Age Park & Trail Foundation	87,256	\$1,539,196	\$631,761
Iditarod National Historic Trail, Inc.	3,920*	\$69,149	\$80,000*
Heritage Trails/Amigos De Anza & others			
Anza Trail Coalition of Arizona	6,870	\$121,187	\$12,000*
Lewis & Clark Trail Heritage Foundation	54,737	\$965,561	\$300,000
Mormon Trails Association	1,390	\$24,520	\$2,040
Iowa Mormon Trails Association	750*	\$13,230	\$2,080*
Nebraska Mormon Trails Association	125*	\$2,205	\$2,635*
National Pony Express Association	35,647	\$628,813	\$25,000
Pony Express Trail Association	5,685	\$100,283	\$38,176
Nez Perce Trail Foundation	3,140	\$55,390	\$5,082
North Country Trail Association	42,297	\$746,119	\$205,877
Old Spanish Trail Association	8,081	\$142,549	\$43,703
Oregon-California Trails Association	57,926	\$1,021, 815	\$591,559
Overmountain Victory Trail Association	800*	\$14,112	
Pacific Crest Trail Association	34,100	\$601,524	\$434,500
Potomac Trail Council	1,500*	\$26,460	
Santa Fe Trail Association	32,600*	\$575,064	\$156,400
Trail of Tears Association	30,840	\$544,018	\$60,958
TOTALS	668,996	\$ 11,801,091	\$6,449,719

* estimate

**CONTRIBUTIONS SUSTAINING THE
NATIONAL SCENIC AND HISTORIC TRAILS
MADE BY
PARTNER TRAIL ORGANIZATIONS**

YEAR	VOLUNTEER HOURS	\$ VALUE OF VOLUNTEER LABOR	FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS	TOTAL \$ VALUE
1995	369,941	\$4,262,093	\$2,754,934	\$ 7,017,027
1996	473,066	\$4,467,794	\$4,071,409	\$ 8,539,203
1997	439,299	\$5,686,028	\$4,243,943	\$ 9,929,971
1998	498,702	\$6,909,157	\$4,403,802	\$11,312,959
1999	553,905	\$7,422,326	\$5,780,340	\$13,202,666
2000	593,392	\$8,799,993	\$6,638,313	\$15,438,306
2001	621,615	\$9,566,652	\$6,652,079	\$16,218,731
2002	662,429	\$10,631,985	\$6,850,214	\$17,482,199
2003	648,548	\$10,726,994	\$6,997,803	\$17,724,797
2004	668,996	\$11,801,091	\$6,449,719	\$18,250,810
TOTAL	5,529,893	\$80,274,113	\$54,842,556	\$135,116,669

The 1995 and 1996 totals represent contributions from 20 organizations for 20 national scenic and historic trails while the 1997 - 2001 totals represent the contributions of 22 organizations for those trails and the 2002 - 2004 totals represent the contributions of 24 organizations for 21 national scenic and historic trails.

**STATUS OF
NINE NATIONAL SCENIC AND HISTORIC TRAILS
WITHOUT FEDERAL LAND ACQUISITION AUTHORITY**

NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL	PROJECTED LENGTH	PROTECTED LENGTH	UNPROTECTED LENGTH
Continental Divide Trail	3200 miles	3087 miles	113 miles
Ice Age Trail	1200 miles	405 miles	795 miles
North Country Trail	4200 miles	1551 miles	2649 miles
Potomac Heritage Trail	715 miles	465 miles	250 miles
TOTAL	9315 miles	5508 miles	3807 miles
NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL	NO. SIGNIFICANT SITES/SEGMENTS	PROTECTED SITES/SEGMENTS	UNPROTECTED SITES/SEGMENTS
Iditarod Trail	approx. 75	11	approx. 64
Lewis & Clark Trail	approx. 270	123	approx. 147
Mormon Pioneer Trail	88	6	82
Nez Perce Trail	80	40	40
Oregon Trail	217	14	203
TOTAL	730	194	536

The figures given are the most accurate available; however they are approximate for all of these trails. Improvements in mapping techniques and historic research are increasing understanding of the full nature of these trails and the resources upon which they are based.

May 1, 2003

DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENT
Required by House Rule XI, clause 2(g)
And Rules of the Committee on Resources

A. This part is to be completed by all witnesses:

1. Name: Gary Werner
2. Business Address: 214 North Henry Street, Suite 203
Madison, WI 53703
3. Business Phone Number: 608-249-7870
4. Organization you are representing: Partnership for the National Trails System

5, 6, 7, 8. **Gary Werner** has served since 1991 first as Chair and now as Executive Director of the Partnership for the National Trails System, a 501c3 non-profit organization federation of 28 trail organizations supporting the 24 national scenic and historic trails. The Partnership works with Congress and the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management to secure adequate funding, administrative support, and authorities for the National Trails System. A resident of Madison, Wisconsin, Gary worked for 12 years for the Ice Age Park & Trail Foundation organizing volunteers, coordinating trail planning and construction projects with the National Park Service, Wisconsin Departments of Natural Resources and Transportation, and negotiating right-of-way purchases with landowners. Over the past 25 years Gary has organized and led volunteers in a variety of natural resource preservation projects for the Sierra Club, The Nature Conservancy, the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy and American Hiking Society. In 1997 he helped organize Americans for Our Heritage and Recreation, a national organization representing more than 150 conservation organizations, to revive Congressional and Administration support for the Land & Water Conservation Fund. Gary serves as the Legislative Conservation Committee Chair and on the Executive Committee of the John Muir Chapter of the Sierra Club in Wisconsin.

B. To be completed by nongovernmental witnesses only:

1. Any federal grants or contracts from the Department of the Interior which you have received:
None
2. Any federal grants or contracts from the Department of the Interior which were received by the organization(s) you represent at this hearing:

The Partnership for the National Trails System received the following grants in
2004: \$6,000 from the National Park Service; \$10,000 from the Bureau of Land Management
2005: \$15,000 from the National Park Service; \$5,000 from the Bureau of Land Management

3. Any other information: None