

National Park Service

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Santa Fe Trail Fall 2020 Newsletter

Santa Fe National Historic Trail

Read the latest project updates and completions from the National Trails Office - Regions 6,7, and 8 (NTIR) of the National Park Service (NPS).

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National Trails Welcomes New Staff

Margaret Frisbie (Meg), recently of the NPS Southeast Regional Office, joined NTIR's cultural resources team in July. Meg holds a Masters of Science in Historic Preservation from the University of Texas School of Architecture, with an undergraduate degree in Latin American Studies from the University of Virginia. She has extensive experience in surveying, documenting, and evaluating landscapes, structures, and sites, and in preparing National Register nominations. For NTIR, Meg will be reviewing environmental documentation to identify potential impacts to national historic trails and engaging in partnership project work.



Margaret Frisbie
Photo/Margaret Frisbie

Contact Meg

Ashley Wheeler
Photo/Ashley Wheeler

Also joining NTIR is **Ashley Wheeler**, an American Conservation Experience Fellow who is handling



national historic trails outreach for NTIR and coordinating activities for the Santa Fe Trail Bicentennial. She is currently a PhD candidate in Communication at Arizona State University, where her studies focus on the rhetoric of historic places and the National Historic Preservation Act. She has a Masters of Science in Architecture, Masters of Arts in Communication, graduate certificate in historic preservation, and a Bachelors of Science in Interior Design. While working on her PhD, Ashley has participated in the US International Council of Monuments and Sites' international exchange

program, and interned with the NPS State, Tribal, and Local Plans and Grants division.

Contact Ashley

Dr. Lillis Urban is the new Chief of Planning with NTIR. Her first tasks for NTIR will be leading both the Pike and the Emancipation national historic trail feasibility studies. Lillis worked previously as a Planning and Environmental Coordinator for the Bureau of Land Management, New Mexico State Office. Her past work also includes positions with New Mexico State Parks, the Bureau of Indian Affairs on the Navajo Nation, and New Mexico State University (NMSU). She holds a Doctorate in Biology from NMSU, focused on ecology and botany, and a Master's Degree in the Biodiversity and Taxonomy of Plants from the University of Edinburgh in Scotland.




Lillis Urban
Photo/Lillis Urban

Contact Lillis

High Potential Sites and Segments Update

NTIR received our first High Potential Sites and Segments (HPSS) submission from the Santa Fe Trail Association (SFTA). The submission was for Fry's Ruts, an excellent way to start the HPSS program. NTIR will be going over the submission and then working with SFTA to fine-tune it. This submission will be used as an


example in the second HPSS workshop at the fall board meeting.


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PLACE

Ralph's Ruts

SANTA FE NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL



The swales at Ralph's Ruts.
Linda Cole

Quick Facts

LOCATION:
Ralph's Ruts are located 4 miles west of Chase, Kansas on Highway 56 and 3/4 mile north on 4th Avenue. At the site is a DAR Marker, a wayside exhibit, and a gate to walk into the field. Nearby are Plum Buttes and Gunsight Notch.

SIGNIFICANCE:
Seven swales are preserved in an untilled field that the public is invited to explore. This is one of the best sets of swales trail-wide.

Installed exhibit includes the story of the site and connects the public to additional nearby sites and online content via a QR code to the new Places website for Ralph's Ruts.

Image/NPS

Accessibility for Everyone

Federal law and agency policy require the NPS to offer media accessible to a wide range of abilities. How the NPS can provide programmatic access in its interpretive efforts to communicate with people with disabilities is a challenging, complex, and confusing topic. We are taking steps to improve the accessibility of our interpretive media for those with vision loss.

It's All Connected

On August 2, 2020, a new wayside exhibit was installed at Ralph's Ruts. The completed design demonstrates how layering types of interpretive media offers something for everyone at a site. Visitors can select the level of information they wish to receive and how they access it, such as by exhibit, webpage, or mobile tour.

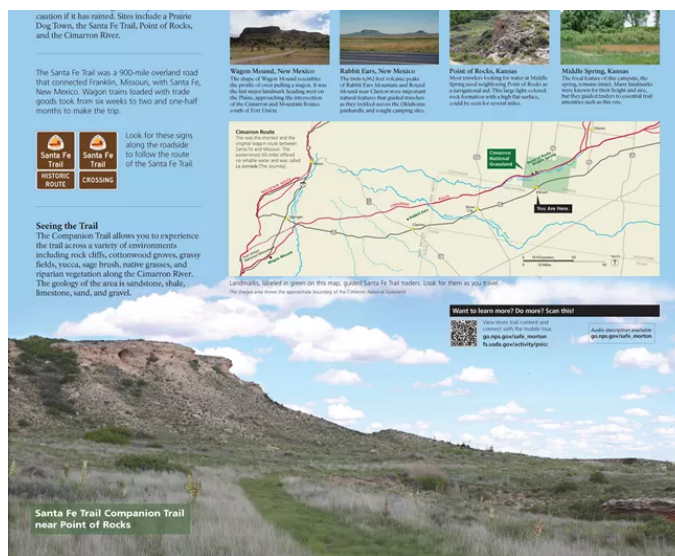
The quick response (QR) code and URL connect visitors to new online content. This includes a new Places website that provides links to accessible content required by law, as well as NPS and SFTA trail-related subject matter, trip planning, and the mobile tour.

The AD))) tag can be seen or felt on the exhibit. By using a smartphone's camera to scan the QR code, the recording is automatically started. Additionally, a URL can be typed into any internet browser to access a page that has a link to the AD))).

Image/NPS

As part of an exhibit project with the Cimarron National Grassland and the Morton County Historical Museum in Elkhart, Kansas, a new accessibility element is available. Audio description, AD))), provides low vision visitors with a descriptive reading of an exhibit. It goes beyond reading text and requires thought and planning for how to best explain the design of the entire exhibit - describing images, maps, and graphics - in a way that portrays the experience that a sighted person has when encountering an exhibit.

All interpretive media products moving forward will have this accessibility element incorporated into the design as appropriate. It is just one more step forward to help more visitors have a meaningful experience.



El Zaguán in Santa Fe, NM, one of the many historic sites addressed in student research from the UNM trails class.

National Historic Trails Course at University of New Mexico (UNM)

As part of a Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CESU) agreement between UNM and NTIR, Dr. Fred Gibbs of the UNM History Department taught a course on the national historic trails in the fall of 2018 and 2019. In addition to studying the national historic

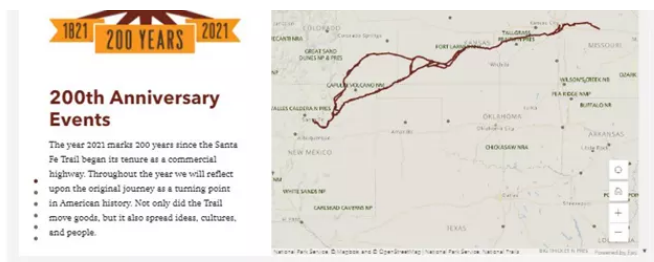
trails in general, students also completed individual research projects on historic sites along the Santa Fe Trail; these short essays taught students key components of public history work, such as reliable sourcing and accessible writing. Members of the History Team have been revising the essays for clarity, accuracy, and formatting. Eventually, they will become part of a web-based travel itinerary on the Santa Fe NHT website.

Bicentennial Update

In order to support the bicentennial efforts of SFTA, a group of NTIR staff has formed the Santa Fe Trail Bicentennial Committee. The committee will provide assistance with outreach, awareness, and planning by

Prototype of the bicentennial events story map which will provide information about events and show where they will occur throughout 2021.

Image/NPS



developing informational materials, digital content, and more. To help spread the news about the many interesting events planned by SFTA, they are developing a calendar and StoryMap which will help the public find events to attend throughout 2021. Additionally, a strategic media plan will further spread awareness of events, the bicentennial, and the trail.

Ivan Boyd Prairie/Black Jack Ruts Project Update

Trail development at Ivan Boyd Prairie/Black Jack Ruts is in full swing. Through local leadership and efforts, the loop portion of the trail has been completed. The final section of trail will be constructed next and will be built to meet ADA guidelines.



Trail work at Ivan Boyd Prairie/Black Jack Ruts.
Photo/Roger Boyd

The hardworking volunteer crew.
Photo/Roger Boyd



Newly installed sign in Barton County, Kansas.

Photo/Larry Short

Signing Updates

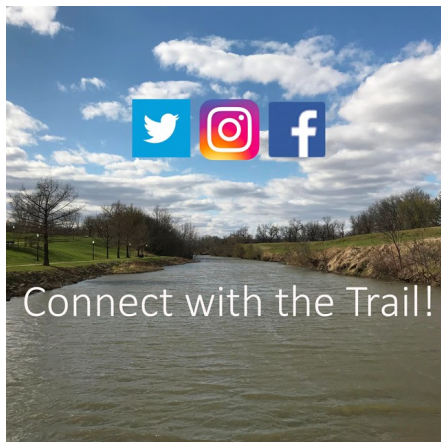
New directional signs were ordered to replace the signs that went missing on Hwy 56, directing the visitors to the Point of Rocks site in New Mexico.

Historic Route and Crossing signs were ordered in 2020 to mark the Santa Fe NHT in Pawnee County, KS, Barton County, KS, and Union County, NM.

Work in the Time of Covid

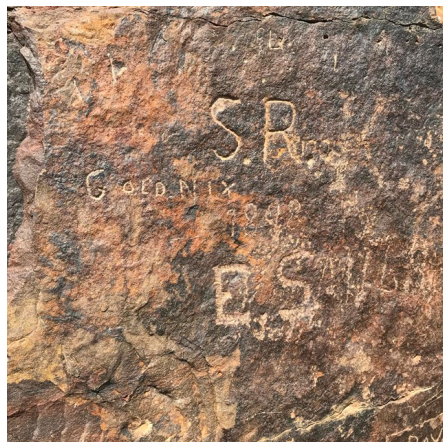
NTIR staff have been teleworking full time from home since mid-March and will continue to do so until notified to return to our offices. Meanwhile, personnel are available during regular work hours through their usual email addresses and cell phone numbers. If you need help with contact information for a member of our team, please call our main office phone number at 505-988-6098.

CONNECT WITH THE TRAIL



Find us on Social Media

Learn more about the trail on social media!



Santa Fe Trail Website

Learn more on the NPS Santa Fe Trail website.



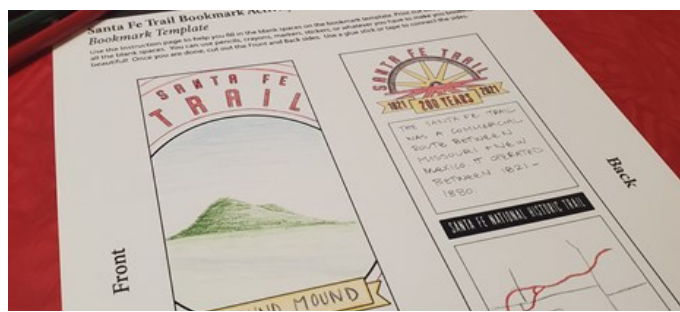
Contact NTIR

Contact NTIR or individual staff.

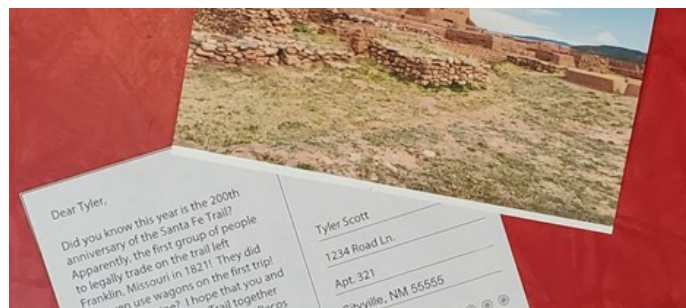
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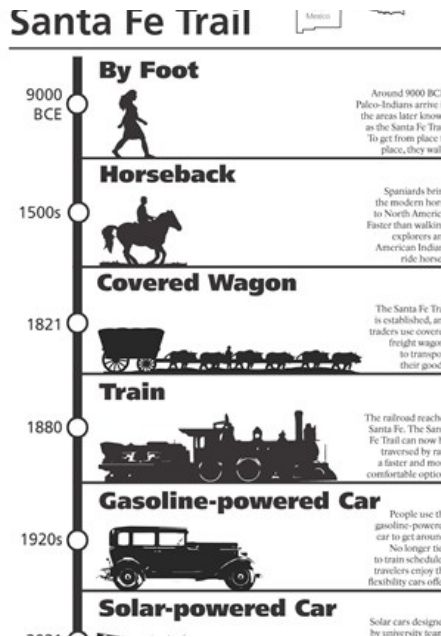
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Last updated: November 5, 2020

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