



Long Walk News

Planning for Long Walk National Historic Trail Feasibility Study is Underway

Why is a study being started?

In the next two years the National Park Service will study the routes of the Long Walk, when people from the Navajo and Mescalero Apache tribes were removed from their homelands in 1863 and 1864. This Feasibility Study, authorized by Congress on August 21, 2002, will consider whether the Long Walk should be added to the National Trails System. The study will consider several questions:

- Is the Long Walk a route established by historic use and is it nationally significant?
- Are the routes of the Long Walk well enough known to provide the potential for historical interpretation and appreciation?
- Should the Long Walk be designated as a National Historic Trail, to be added to the National Trails System?

To meet the criteria of national significance, the Long Walk must be of “exceptional value” in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the United States. The feasibility study will make a recommendation on national significance – a recommendation



Navajo Indians construct a building at Fort Sumner in 1866.
Courtesy: National Archives, Signal Corps Photo 111-SC-87973

that will be sent to the National Park System Advisory Board for concurrence.

An environmental impact study (EIS) will be prepared to analyze potential impacts from any federal actions.

What is a National Historic Trail?

A National Historic Trail (NHT) follows as closely as possible the original trails or routes of travel associated with significant historic events. Designated by Congress, NHTs are a series of historic sites and trail segments which, taken together, comprise the NHT. (They are not hiking trails.)

Typically these historic sites and trail segments are in private ownership. To become part of the NHT, the owner agrees to preserve the site or segment and open it occasionally to the public.

Other sites and segments are in public ownership. For example, Fort Sumner at the Bosque Redondo is a New Mexico state monument. Museums and cultural centers along the NHT route are important because they provide interpretation and education through exhibits, programs, activities, and in many other ways.

Message from the Superintendent

Dear Friends:

Welcome to the Long Walk National Historic Trail Feasibility Study. We wish to announce the start of this planning process and to invite you to participate. With your help, the historic routes associated with this tragic event in our nation's history will be studied and considered for possible addition to the National Trails System. This is an opportunity to explore ways to commemorate and to remember the people most affected by the Long Walk – the Navajo Nation and Mescalero Apache Tribe.

Staff from the National Park Service's National Trails System Office (Santa Fe, New Mexico) will lead the planning effort. They will offer many ways for you to provide your thoughts on this important project.

We thank each of you for your time and interest. Your participation is important, and we urge your continued involvement throughout the planning effort.

Sincerely,

Jere L. Krakow
Superintendent
National Trails System, Intermountain Region
National Park Service

What was the Navajo and Mescalero Apache Long Walk?

The Long Walk was the forced removal and relocation of the Navajo and Mescalero Apache people from their home lands in 1863 and 1864. Over 8,500 people were marched into years-long internment at the Bosque Redondo reservation on the Pecos River at Fort Sumner, New Mexico.

The Navajo and the Apache had seen their lands in New Mexico and Arizona claimed, first by Spaniards arriving after 1598, and later by Anglos when American military forces invaded New Mexico in 1846.

The American military took action against the tribes after years of inter-tribal warfare, raids on both sides (Indians, and Mexicans and Americans) for captives to be sold into slavery, and other grievances. In 1862 Brigadier General James H. Carleton, Commander of the Department of New Mexico, ordered the Mescalero Apache to be subjugated. By early 1863, Colonel Christopher (Kit) Carson

had vanquished the Mescalero and sent about 400 men, women, and children into internment at Fort Sumner in eastern New Mexico.

Carleton then turned his attention to the Navajo. He ordered them to turn themselves in or be considered "hostile." Kit Carson led another military campaign – this time using a "scorched earth" policy of burning and destruction to force people to leave their homes. These actions starved hundreds of Navajo into surrendering, most in 1863 and 1864. In several succeeding marches they were taken under military guard to the Bosque Redondo. By 1865 over 8,000 Navajo shared the reservation with about 500 Mescalero Apache.

The Mescalero Apache did not stay long. On the night of November 3, 1865, most of them escaped from the Bosque Redondo. They were not re-captured.

The Navajo were held in captivity for more than four years. In June 1868, a peace treaty was signed at Fort Sumner and the Navajo were freed from internment. That same month the Navajo returned to their homelands and their newly established reservation.



"View of Farming Land," Mescalero Reservation, New Mexico, c. 1936. Photograph by Arthur Rothstein. Courtesy: Library of Congress.

What are the Planning Issues?

Planning issues are the specific questions that the Feasibility Study will address. National Park Service planners will meet with the Navajo Nation, the Mescalero Apache tribe, government agencies, and the general public to answer the following questions:

- Is the removal of the Mescalero and Navajo people to the Bosque Redondo nationally significant?
- Which routes of removal (which must be identified) are most significant?
- How do we commemorate the trails (coming from and returning to tribal lands) and the experience at the Bosque Redondo?
- Are the campaigns against the Mescalero and Navajo people



Navajo family with a flock of sheep. Navajo Reservation, Arizona, August 1891.
Source: 11th US Census, 1891.

that immediately led to the removal significant; should they be included?

- Are the Navajo Nation and the Mescalero Apache Tribe in favor of NHT designation or other means of preservation and interpretation?

What are the most significant resources to be preserved?

- By what means would the trail and the Bosque Redondo be managed to tell a comprehensive story?



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Long Walk National Historic Trail Feasibility Study

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The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

How Can You Participate?

Your thoughts and ideas are important for this planning process. Perhaps you would like to share stories because you had an ancestor involved with the Long Walk. Perhaps you know of historic sites or routes that you could identify. Are there other planning issues that should be addressed to make the NHT determination? Do you think the Long Walk should be designated as an NHT? We want your input whether through your attendance at public meetings, or by mail, fax, phone, or e-mail.

The feasibility study will be conducted collaboratively with the American Indian tribes historically involved with the events of the Long Walk. Consultation with federal, state, and local agencies and other interested organizations, groups, and individuals will occur. Additionally, open meetings with the general public will be scheduled within the study area.



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Long Walk News was produced in connection with the Long Walk National Historic Trail Feasibility Study.

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What is the Study Schedule?

Public scoping meetings will be announced in the news media. They are scheduled for:

September 2003 – Grants, Bosque Farms, Santa Fe, Las Vegas, and Fort Sumner, New Mexico.

October 2003 (tentative) – Chinle, Window Rock, and Tuba City, Arizona; Shiprock, Crownpoint, Ramah, Alamo, Tohajiilee, and Mescalero, New Mexico.

November 2003-April 2004 – Draft feasibility study/EIS will be prepared and made available for public review.

September 2004 – Draft feasibility study/EIS will be made available for public review.

June 2005 – Final feasibility study/EIS will be completed.