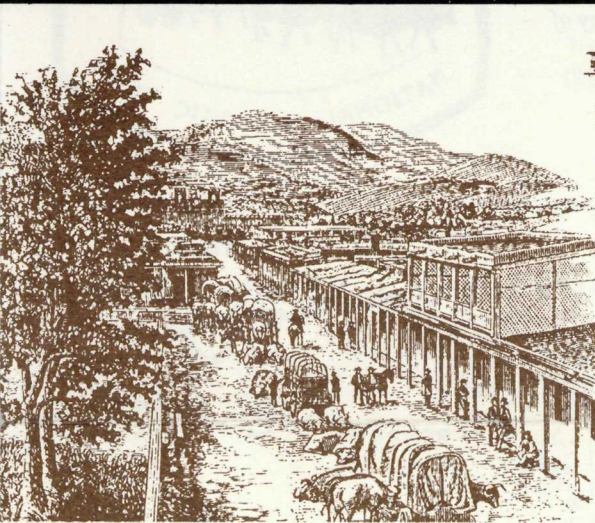


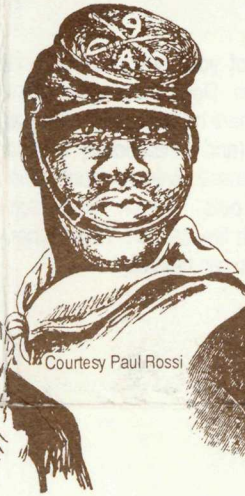
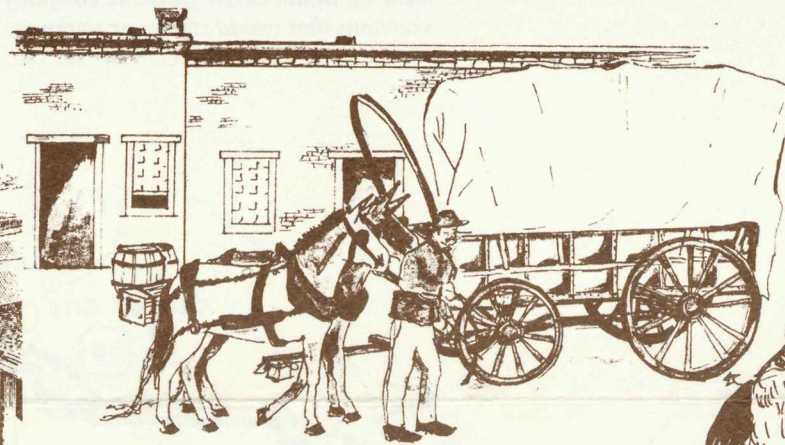
Santa Fe Trail

National Historic Trail
CO - KS - MO - NM - OK

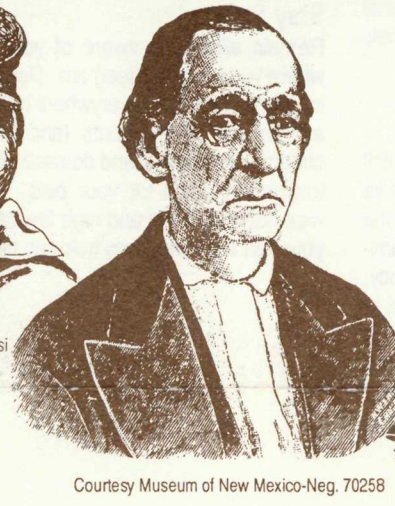
National Park Service
U. S. Department of the Interior



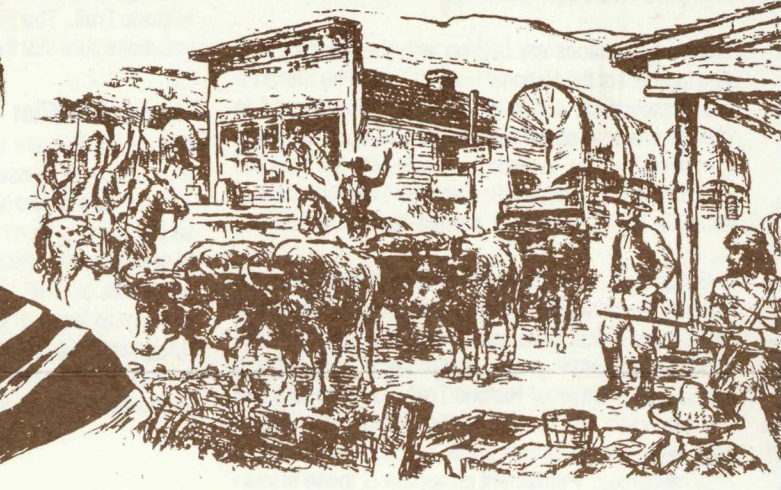
Courtesy Museum of New Mexico-Neg. 144637



Courtesy Paul Rossi



Courtesy Museum of New Mexico-Neg. 70258



Commerce on the Move

Take a moment to listen, with your imagination, as freight wagons rumble by—bullwhackers shout and snap their whips—oxen bellow—buffalo thunder by—bugles blare. Listen to the quiet conversations in Spanish and English around the campfire—the music and laughter of a fandango.

The mention of the Santa Fe Trail stirs people's imaginations as few other historic trails can. During its colorful history, this legendary route provided a two-way avenue for commerce—played a crucial role in the westward expansion of the United States—brought cultural exchange but also conflict to the varied peoples who used the Trail—and served as a stage for countless human dramas.

Often following game trails, Indians pioneered routes to hunt and trade with other tribes. Indians led Spanish explorers along these traditional routes. Other explorers and Hispanic settlers who traded with the Indians followed. In the 1700s, French traders tried to establish trade with Santa Fe—the provincial capital of Spanish New Mexico—but, like the Americans who tried in the early 1800s, they frequently were thrown in jail and their trade goods were confiscated. By the early 1800s, Spanish settlements like Santa Fe (already 200 years old) were well established, the westward expansion of American culture had reached Missouri, trappers and explorers were pushing farther into Indian territories, and Indian peoples struggled to continue their traditional lifestyles. Three major cultures were about to converge along the trail route that all had a role in preparing.

Under Spanish rule, trade with the United States was forbidden, and commerce could only be conducted by secrecy and smuggling. In 1821, Mexico achieved independence from Spain, and dropped trade barriers. Shortly thereafter, a party of five men led by William Becknell, who had left Franklin, Missouri, to trade "to the westward," encountered a group of Mexican soldiers who guided them to Santa Fe, where they sold their goods. Thus encouraged by Mexican officials, the now-legal commerce turned into a burgeoning trade, providing an economic boon for the economies of Mexico's northern provinces and the State of Missouri. Across 900 miles of what are now the States of Missouri, Kansas, Colorado, Oklahoma, and New Mexico, merchants pushed enormous caravans of freight wagons westward, loaded with goods for customers in New Mexico that they traded for silver coin, mules, and wool. The Trail took on a distinctly international character as Mexican and American merchants, sometimes in partnerships, developed this commerce across the plains. By the early 1840s, Mexicans may have dominated this international trade, with banking and business ties extending to St. Louis, New York, and even London and Paris. But events were soon to change the nature of trade and the Trail.

Tension and suspicion between the United States and Mexico increased in the 1830s, spurred by Texas independence in 1836. Intensifying the situation were armed raids into New Mexico from Texas in the early 1840s, the annexation of Texas by the United States in 1845, and increased sentiment favoring American territorial expansion. War soon followed. In 1846, the first year of the Mexican War, Colonel Stephen W. Kearny led U.S. troops down

the Santa Fe Trail to New Mexico, and marched without armed opposition into Santa Fe. Subsequently, there were revolts against the U.S. occupation, such as the 1847 uprisings at Taos, Mora, and other communities. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which ended the war in 1848, added New Mexico to the United States. The volume of business along the Santa Fe Trail—much of it supplies destined for U.S. Army posts in the new territory—dwarfed pre-war trade, but the Trail's international character faded as a new era began on the road between Santa Fe and Missouri.

As human traffic increased, the Plains Indian tribes saw their homelands, subsistence, and lifeways in jeopardy. More and more confrontations occurred between Indians and travelers. To protect trade caravans, the U.S. Army established military posts like Fort Union (1851) and Fort Larned (1860). Ultimately, Indian resistance could not match the well-equipped incursion into their lands.

The Civil War came to New Mexico in 1861. In early 1862, a Confederate force marched up the Rio Grande, intent upon capturing Fort Union—and, ultimately, the Colorado gold mines. Soon after Albuquerque and Santa Fe fell, volunteer and regular Federal troops defeated the Confederates at Glorieta Pass—the most decisive western battle of the Civil War—thereby ending the Confederate threat.

Trail traffic was primarily freighting. Santa Fe area Mexican families sometimes sent their children east along the Trail to be educated in the United States. Stagecoach and mail traffic began in the 1850s. Much of the limited emigration from the east consisted of families of traders and military personnel. The

journals and remembrances of women like Marian Sloan Russell and Susan Shelby Magoffin have provided most of our knowledge of life on the Trail beyond the traders' world.

Over time, the Santa Fe Trail developed many routes, braids, and shortcuts that responded to varying landscapes and local conditions, and criss-crossed with other trails and roads. In the 1840s, the longer, safer, and better-watered Mountain Route was opened across Colorado and through the difficult terrain of Raton Pass into New Mexico, providing an alternative to the main trail (Cimarron Route) along the usually dry Cimarron River, where travelers found water only in a few widely scattered springs. By the Civil War, Indian resistance had forced most of the expanding Trail traffic to use the Mountain Route.

The close of the Civil War released the Nation's great industrial energies. The railroad moved westward, providing cheaper and faster transportation. Trail trade continued in large volume as the wagons of large commercial freighting companies carried freight from the railhead, but as the rail lines got longer the Trail became shorter. Trails of mud and dust simply could not compete with trails of steel. In February 1880, as the first steam locomotive arrived at the New Mexican capital, the Santa Fe Trail's era of commerce and conquest passed silently into memory.

*"Men show their inside character out here where there are none of the restraints of civilization."
(David Kellogg, 1858)*

"The whole distance from the settlements on the Missouri to the Mountains in the neighborhood of Santa Fe, is a prairie country, with no obstructions in the route, except the rivers and creeks, and those are generally fordable, with firm sloping banks. No bridges are deemed necessary. A good wagon road can, therefore, be traced out, upon which a sufficient supply of fuel and water can be procured, at all seasons, except in winter."

(Alphonso Wetmore, 1824)



Inscription by Santa Fe Trail trader.
Autograph Rock, Cimarron County, Oklahoma.

The Trail Today

The freight wagons no longer roll across the prairies, but evidence of the great days of the Trail still exists in the form of buildings and other historic sites; landmarks that guided the Trail travelers; and, what is most alluring to many, the remains of the original ruts of the wagon wheels worn into the earth. For many Americans, the Trail story did not end with the last wagon train. A variety of local, state, and even national efforts have been undertaken to preserve and interpret Trail resources. The

establishment of the National Trails System Act, and a growing awareness of the rich multicultural history of the Trail, have brought about renewed interest in national recognition of this important chapter in our Country's past.

In 1987, Congress acknowledged the significance of the Trail by establishing the Santa Fe National Historic Trail. The Department of the Interior's National Park Service administers the Trail in cooperation with federal, state, and local agencies; interested groups; and private landowners.

The National Park Service coordinates efforts, and provides technical and limited financial assistance to guide the preservation, development, and enjoyment of the Trail. Management of Trail resources remains with individual landowners, non-profit groups, and federal, state, and local agencies. Planned activities include the marking of an auto tour route; historical research; resource protection; the development of Trail brochures, a guidebook, and other publications; and production of exhibits and a major interpretive film.

We Need Your Help

The Santa Fe National Historic Trail can only be successful with the hard work and dedication of public officials, citizen volunteers, and private landowners of the Trail community who want to preserve the historic resources of the Trail and make its story known to the public. The Trail can be an aid to community efforts for historic preservation and interpretation, greenways, and other public recreation planning.

Many organizations are helping with the planning and development of the National Historic Trail. The Santa Fe Trail Association, a non-profit organization formed in 1986 to promote public awareness and appreciation of the Santa Fe Trail, is working closely with the National Park Service. Its address is: Santa Fe Trail Association, Santa Fe Trail Center, RR3, Larned, Kansas 67550.

You can help with the development of the Santa Fe National Historic Trail by joining or supporting the work of The Santa Fe Trail Association, state and local historical societies, and other groups that promote or assist with the Santa Fe National Historic Trail. Landowners and site managers can pursue certification of their sites or Trail segments to further public use and protection of Trail resources. Permanent protection of these resources can be achieved by donation of lands or easements

to land trusts or other appropriate groups. Financial contributions can support Trail programs. Donations of money, land, or easements may qualify as tax-deductible gifts. For more information contact the National Park Service at the address below.

Enjoying the Trail

Today, you can look forward to your own share of adventures as you visit sites along the Santa Fe National Historic Trail. The National Park Service wants to help you make sure that they're all pleasant ones.

Remember That You're a Guest.

Private landowners are graciously allowing you to visit their sites—so please behave the way you'd like guests on your own property to behave. Leave everything the way you find it. Don't disturb the owner, or owner's family or employees, except in the rare case of emergency, accidents, or other problems. Owners retain the right to ask you to leave at any time. Obey posted signs, use designated roads and parking areas, and limit your stay to only the time necessary to appreciate the natural and cultural resources of the sites.

Protect the Trail.

Protecting the Trail means always respecting the features of the sites that you visit. Stay on designated hiking/horse trails unless otherwise indicated. Please stay off historic buildings, ruins, and other structures. Please don't use metal-detectors or dig at sites—collect artifacts, or remove anything that doesn't belong to you—or carve on trees, posts, walls, or other surfaces.

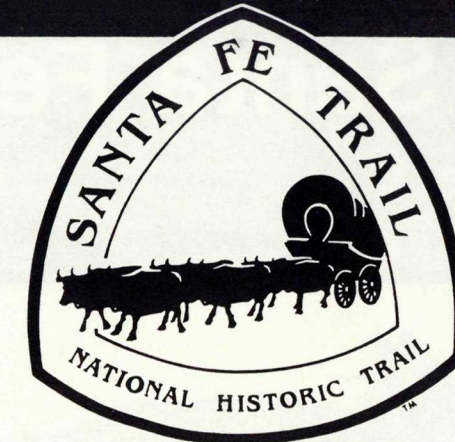
Stay Safe.

Remain alert, and aware of your surroundings, and where you (and your feet) are. Don't assume that warning signs are posted everywhere hazards exist. Keep an eye on the whereabouts (and whatabouts) of your children. Leave wild and domestic animals alone. Don't forget to provide for your pets. Watch for extreme weather conditions and high fire danger. Know where your nearest emergency help can be found.

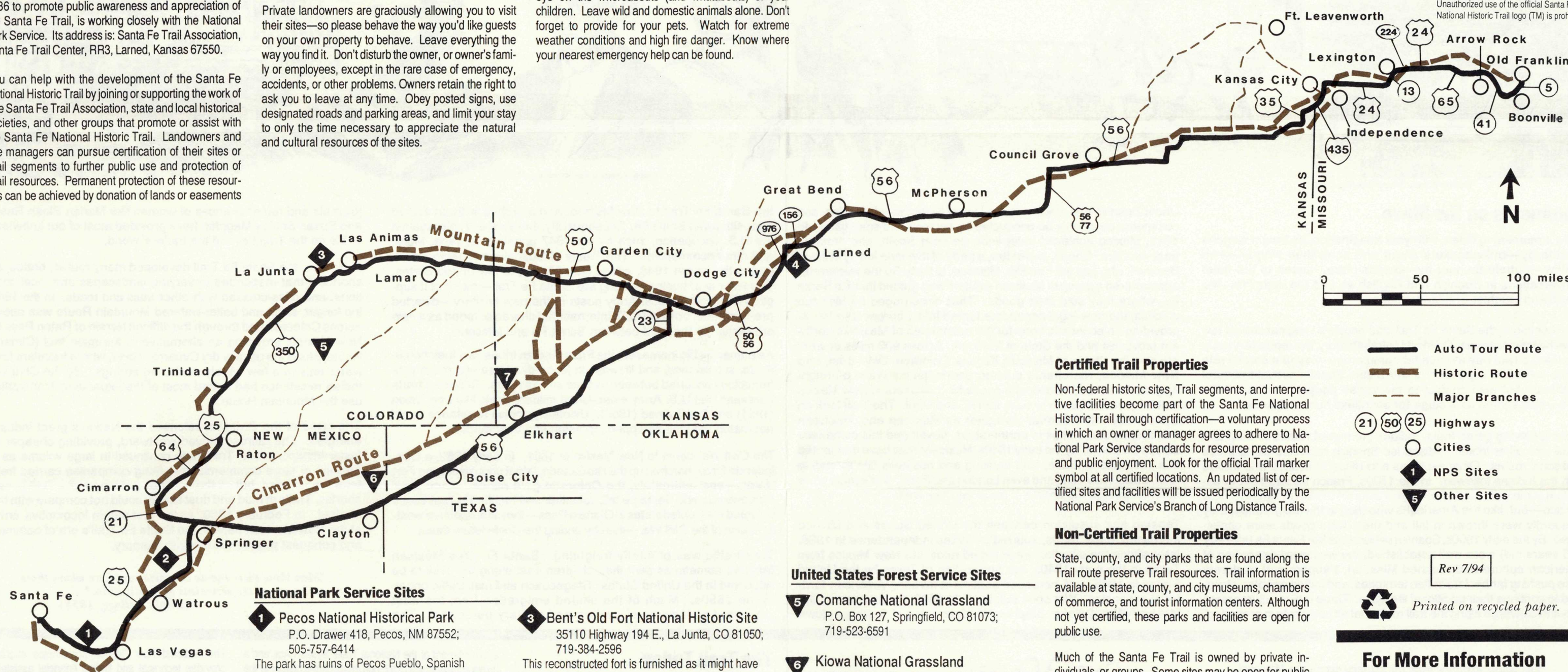
Take Advantage of Facilities in Communities Near the Trail.

Stop at local chambers of commerce and information centers to learn about Trail-related sites and other interesting features and activities. Many Trail sites lack amenities, so plan ahead by using public restrooms and other facilities while you are still in town.

"Far away from my wife and child, and six hundred miles of constant danger in an uninhabited region was not a pleasant prospect for contemplation. But I laughed with the rest, joked about roasting our bacon with buffalo chips, and the enjoyment we would derive from the company of skeletons that would strew our pathway."
(Hezekiah Brake, 1858)



Unauthorized use of the official Santa Fe National Historic Trail logo (TM) is prohibited.



"But the rejoicing at home . . . the feasts and the bailes (dances)—not to mention the wine made in their absence and saved for the occasion—was a rich compensation in itself for the hardships that were now in the dead past."
(José Librado Gurulé's Recollections, 1867)

National Park Service Sites

1 Pecos National Historical Park
P.O. Drawer 418, Pecos, NM 87552;
505-757-6414
The park has ruins of Pecos Pueblo, Spanish colonial missions, Trail ruts and sites, and Battle of Glorieta Pass sites.

2 Fort Union National Monument
Watrous, NM 87753;
505-425-8025
The adobe ruins and stone foundations of the fort, once the major military depot of the southwest, and extensive Trail ruts are preserved in the park.

3 Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site
35110 Highway 194 E., La Junta, CO 81050;
719-384-2596
This reconstructed fort is furnished as it might have been in 1846, when it was a private commercial trading depot.

4 Fort Larned National Historic Site
Rt. 3, Larned, KS 67550;
316-285-6911
Fort Larned is one of the best preserved frontier military posts in the west. A small outlying area protects Santa Fe Trail ruts.

United States Forest Service Sites

5 Comanche National Grassland
P.O. Box 127, Springfield, CO 81073;
719-523-6591

6 Kiowa National Grassland
16 N. Second St., Clayton, NM 88415;
505-374-9652

7 Cimarron National Grassland
P.O. Box J, Elkhart, KS 67950;
316-697-4621

Trail ruts and sites are preserved and interpreted. Hiking trails parallel some of the route.

Certified Trail Properties

Non-federal historic sites, Trail segments, and interpretive facilities become part of the Santa Fe National Historic Trail through certification—a voluntary process in which an owner or manager agrees to adhere to National Park Service standards for resource preservation and public enjoyment. Look for the official Trail marker symbol at all certified locations. An updated list of certified sites and facilities will be issued periodically by the National Park Service's Branch of Long Distance Trails.

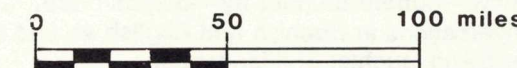
Non-Certified Trail Properties

State, county, and city parks that are found along the Trail route preserve Trail resources. Trail information is available at state, county, and city museums, chambers of commerce, and tourist information centers. Although not yet certified, these parks and facilities are open for public use.

Much of the Santa Fe Trail is owned by private individuals, or groups. Some sites may be open for public use. Consult guidebooks and ask locally before going on private land.

Auto Tour Route

Auto tour route highways are marked with distinctive signs to aid you in visiting Trail sites. Contact the Branch of Long Distance Trails for more information.



- Auto Tour Route
- Historic Route
- Major Branches
- Highways
- Cities
- NPS Sites
- Other Sites

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For More Information

Branch of Long Distance Trails
National Park Service
Southwest Regional Office
P.O. Box 728
Santa Fe, NM 87504-0728
505-988-6888