



# Connect Trails to Parks

## *A Three Year Program Report*



**FRONT COVER:**

Backpacking trainees and counsellors pose along the  
North Country National Scenic Trail at Pictured Rocks  
National Lakeshore in Michigan.

Photo courtesy FiveRivers Metroparks.



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## *A Three Year Program Report*

By Steven Elkinton, Program Leader  
National Trails System Program

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At the Cathlapotle Plankhouse in the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge along the Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail, two children come to explore educational programs. Photo courtesy U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

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# Introduction

Within the National Park Service (NPS), the CONNECT TRAILS TO PARKS (CTTP) funding program was initiated in 2006 as part of the National Park System Centennial planned for 2016. A line item for \$837,000 eventually found its way into the NPS budget for FY 2008, accompanied by a program description that authorizes applying these funds to:

1. facilities and projects where components of the National Trails System cross or touch units of the National Park System,
2. links to other Federal facilities or programs associated with NPS-administered national trails, and
3. places where the entire National Trails System is presented or interpreted.

Administration of this funding program was assigned to the NPS National Trails System program office in the Washington Office, and the first announcement soliciting projects went out in mid-winter after the FY 2008 budget was confirmed. The program was pitched to emphasize leveraging of funds and volunteer involvement, health and community benefits, connections to other trails and trail systems, and youth involvement through education and other means. Project eligibility was based on minimal qualifying criteria (see Appendix A) while selection ranking was based on criteria reflecting the values shown in Appendix B.

Thirty one paper applications came in by the March, 2008, deadline, so a review panel was assembled to select the best projects for funding, using the published selection criteria. The 14 funded projects are listed in Appendix C. In the course of this cycle it became apparent that the program was no longer part of the NPS Centennial in 2016, but, instead, would commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the National Trails System in the years leading up to 2018. Also, only projects on NPS lands were solicited and processed in this first-run. In subsequent years qualifying projects managed by other Federal agencies along NPS-administered trails have also been considered.

In FYs 2009 and 2010 funds for this program were again available. For these rounds, however, applications were to be submitted electronically through the NPS Project Management Information System (PMIS), making submissions from other agencies more cumbersome in that they had to be entered by cooperating NPS office staff. The project maximum was reduced from \$150,000 to \$100,000 to spread the money to more projects and avoid large-scale construction projects. For FY 2009 another review panel selected from the 24 submitted projects the top-ranked 15 (they are listed in Appendix D). For FY 2010, there were not enough applications to require competition, so there was no review panel. In addition, project selection was moved back into the final months of the previous fiscal year so that allocations to individual projects could be announced at the very beginning of the new fiscal year. The FY 2010 projects are shown in Appendix E

The purpose of this paper is to assess the program's first three annual cycles and suggest ways to improve it. Specifically, the program's progress is summarized, selected projects are profiled in depth to understand their benefits, an assessment is made on how the program is meeting the need of better linking national trail and national park areas, and suggestions are made to improve the program.





# Connect Trails to Parks Projects 2008 - 2010





# Sample Projects

Each year in this program a rich array of proposed projects builds on the program’s basic purpose. The projects selected for detailed discussion here emphasize the partnership and stewardship values underlying the program and the National Trails System as a whole. For FYs 2008 and 2009 they have been largely completed – the FY 2010 projects are currently underway. The highlighted projects are just a sampling of the creative and innovative projects that now strongly link components of the National Trails System to national park areas and other related Federal facilities. (Project names used are condensed from the full project names in individual project application forms.)

## 2008

### A Lesson in Human Rights

#### Little Rick Central High School National Historic Site, Little Rock, AR Trail of Tears National Historic Trail

The main message of Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site is a civil rights story, a struggle for equality and freedom. The main story of the nearby Trail of Tears NHT is one of freedom denied and the physical removal of a people from their homeland. This project proposed a variety of media (bike tours, podcasts, interactive website, curriculum guide, and a special event) to engage the public in comparing and contrasting these two human rights stories. Plus, costing only \$7,400, it was one

of the smallest grants made in this program and achieved remarkable and ongoing benefits.



Sept. 28, 2008, on the Junction Bridge, Little Rock, AR. Cherokee Principal Chief Chad Smith (with green folder) prepares to address the “Lesson in Human Rights” bike tour. NPS photo.

The project’s special event was jointly sponsored with the Trail of Tears Association and held during their annual meeting in September, 2008. It was located on the Junction Bridge over the Arkansas River between Little Rock and North Little Rock. The



Chief of the Cherokee Nation, Chad Smith, opened the event with good press coverage. One nice spin-off of this event has been a continuing relationship between Central High School and the Cherokee Nation.

In the summer of 2010, Central High School staff held a teacher workshop on the Trail of Tears and related resources around Little Rock. Other parts of the project have evolved more or less independently of each other. The podcast, lesson plans, and interactive website map are still in process. In addition, the park-sponsored bike tours continue as a popular way to see the civil rights history of Little Rock and the United States. When they are conducted along the Arkansas River, strong emphasis is given to the Trail of Tears story.

This project's greatest benefit is getting people to see their world in new ways. It has enabled Central High School staff to expand their story to illustrate the continuum of struggle for citizenship and equality throughout the Nation's history. It has also helped Little Rock residents to see their urban setting freshly in relation to the struggles of the past.

Project contact: Laura A. Miller, Chief of Interpretation and Cultural Resources, Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site.

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## **Backpacking and Hiking on the North Country National Scenic Trail**

### **Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park, Dayton, OH, and others sites North Country National Scenic Trail**

Another small grant (\$12,950 in FY 2008 and \$6,570 in FY 2009) enabled the Five Rivers MetroParks Recreation Division in greater Dayton to organize three different programs to bring visibility to the North Country NST. FiveRivers Metroparks already had a proven record of introducing local residents to backpacking and related types of recreation.

The first program's goal was to develop independent, confident backpacking enthusiasts who would ultimately be able to organize and plan their own trips on the North Country NST. Starting in the classroom to learn about concepts and equipment, the group moved to an overnight encampment and then a weekend trip to the North Country Trail in Shawnee State Forest.

The second program included a North Country NST day-hiking series with prizes (water bottle and trekking poles). All of the hikes were on the Trail in Dayton with one of the hikes at Wright Memorial Visitor Center at Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park.

The final program included workshops to introduce under-served families to hiking and camping. The grant fostered a three-part training experience: a 2.5 hour introduction, an 18-hour overnight at Eastwood MetroPark on the North Country NST, and then a 5-day trip to Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore also on the North Country NST. Altogether, over 60 people participated. Trip leader Alex Cook said, "The most magical moment of the trip was watching the sunset over Lake Superior and realizing how much the kids actually enjoyed nature at its core. We weren't playing games outside but actually enjoying nature at its finest."

Participants in the North Country NST Backpacking and Hiking programs rest at a trail junction in Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore. Photo courtesy FiveRivers MetroParks.



One mother said, “I want to visit more parks and National Parks, as well as learn more about different camping techniques like getting water from a lake to use as drinking water.” Another said, “I really enjoyed everything about the trip, what I enjoyed most was Miner’s Beach, the

hike and when we entered the beach area. It was as if we were entering paradise.” And another, “The kids showed a real interest in everything, and I really feel this experience and more like this is essential to their moral psyche. Thank you for giving us this gift.” And, “Thanks for allowing us to meet and bond and make new friends. The trip was truly a blessing.”

Youth said, “I don’t want to camp by myself, but I can camp with my family.” “My Mother was more calm than usual.” “We should make this an annual thing with the same people!”

One immediate benefit of this training was to help develop an active outdoor lifestyle and reverse the current nationwide trend where fewer and fewer adults and children take time to experience the out-of-doors. This trip nurtured a conservation mindset and inspired a lasting connection with nature for those who participated. In the short term this project made a lasting impact and provided a new experience with nature and travel that some of the participants may have never otherwise received in their lives. All of the participants in the family camping program were energized to continue their new found activity immediately following the trip to Pictured Rocks. The family camping/hiking series opened their eyes to the fact that it wasn’t as hard as they thought to camp or enjoy the outdoors, and all enthusiastically looked forward to camping again on their own. In the 2010 family camping/hiking program, one family came back with more kids because of their excitement to experience the outdoors.

In 2010, Five Rivers Metroparks has continued with programming that replicated all three parts of the grant, offering a backpacking progression complete with a trip, a family camping/hiking program with underserved families in Dayton, and a “Hike for the Health of It” day-hiking series where several hikes took place on or near the North Country NST.

Five Rivers MetroParks actively promotes the North Country NST in a variety of ways, such as:

- During backpacking programs and outreach,
- Hosting a North Country Trail Day Hiking Series with a water bottle giveaway, and

- Exhibiting at GearFest and the The Adventure Summit, two of the largest outdoor lifestyle events in the Midwest. A total of 13,000 people attend these events annually.
- Incorporating the North Country NST brand into park brochures and signs along the trail.
- Bringing the North Country NST Annual Conference to Dayton in August 2011.
- Incorporating North County NST signs and other procedures into local trail manuals.

Project contact: Brent Anslinger, Outdoor Recreation Manager, Five Rivers MetroParks, Dayton, OH.

## Monument Valley Historical Trails Waysides & Kiosks

**Scotts Bluff National Monument, Scotts Bluff, NE**

**Oregon, California, Mormon Pioneer, and Pony Express National Historic Trails**

Adjoining Scotts Bluff National Monument, Nebraska, the cities of Scottsbluff and Gering are in the process of installing Riverside Park along the Platte River. Besides offering recreational features, the park invites visitors to explore the unique habitat of the Platte River floodplain (and its wildlife and invasive species issues) and to learn about the covered wagon pioneers who followed the Platte River upstream in the 1840s and 1850s to the Oregon Country and California on various trails on both banks of the river.

Over the years, Riverside Park had become choked with tamarisk, Russian olive, and *phragmites*. In removing them, the community developed these goals for the park:

1. To restore the native flora and fauna found along the riparian habitat of the North Platte River.
2. To create trails for recreation, educational, and historical enjoyment
3. To enable visitors to enjoy the beauty, history, and recreational opportunities of the region.
4. To create a public space for community events.



View from Riverside Park showing the Platte River and Scotts Bluff National Monument in the background.



One aspect of the newly renovated park is an arboretum of native tree and shrub species, with an emphasis on plants seen by the covered wagon pioneers. It also ties into the Monument Valley Pathways and community trails system. Earlier in the project, NPS's Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) program had provided technical assistance, bringing together all the relevant stakeholders to ensure the project's success.

This funding provided state-of-the-art interpretive structures to complete this ambitious park plan, with 10 wayside exhibits and an information kiosk at the arboretum. All signs are in both English and Spanish and connect stylistically to the information signs inside the nearby National Monument. Additional messages can easily be conveyed to visitors by cell phone. Some of the messages emphasize the health benefits of walking and being out-of-doors.

The full list of Riverside Park partners includes:

- City of Gering, NE
- City of Scottsbluff, NE
- Local volunteers
- North Platte Valley Museum
- Riverside Discovery Center
- Scotts Bluff County Tourism
- Scotts Bluff National Monument
- Twin Cities Development
- United Chambers of Commerce
- University of Nebraska Extension Service, Panhandle Station  
(incl. Master Naturalists)
- University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Department of Agronomy  
and Horticulture
- University of Nebraska Master Gardeners

This partnership remains intact and vibrant with productive monthly meetings of the Citizens Riverfront Development Committee. The \$47,500 (\$20,000 in FY 2008, \$20,000 in 2009, and \$7,500 in FY 2010) invested in this project was more than matched by many other contributions and stakeholders, such as staff design hours, donated construction materials, land clearing, construction of the trails and berms, installation of wayside bases, the cell phone system, donation of trees and plants, brochure design and printing, and web services, for a project total of over \$240,000.



Currently, the removal of invasive plants is largely complete – with thriving native plants coming in to replace them. Phase 1 of the arboretum tree-planting has just been completed. Already the project has become a wonderful way to inform and educate both local residents and out-of-town visitors about the area’s heritage and the significance of the westering trails.

Project Contact: Ken Mabery, Superintendent, Scotts Bluff National Monument.

## Making Conservation and Community Connections

### Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller NHS and Appalachian NST, Woodstock, VT

#### Appalachian National Scenic Trail

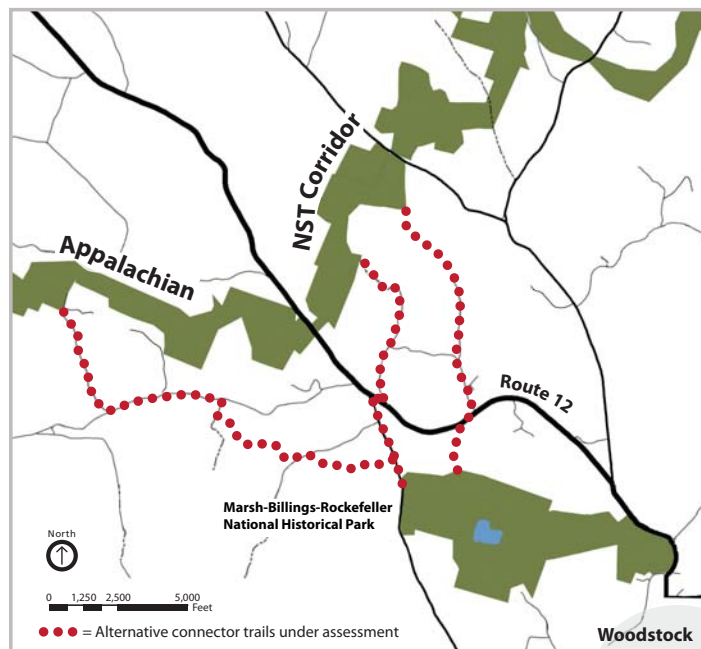
The Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historic Site lies four miles from the Appalachian NST. The conservation story it embodies is parallel to and just as dramatic as the Trail’s conservation history and significance. A connecting trail between them would form a fitting and beneficial symbolic link. It crosses the picturesque Prosper Valley where four New England towns -- Woodstock, Barnard, Bridgewater, and Pomfret -- meet.

Working closely with the Woodstock Trail Partnership (already responsible for over 30 miles of trails), park staff sought to build a trail that could tell some of the area’s rich history in early recreation, trail building, forestry, and conservation stewardship. Thanks to this project, the expanded Partnership is now better linked to more established groups, such as the venerable Green Mountain Club.

In crafting this connection, a 5-part project emerged: planning the trail corridor link, installing 4 interpretive kiosks, developing an area trail map, crafting ranger programs about the Appalachian Trail (AT) and the National Trails System as a whole, and upgrading the park website to say more about the AT and this new



Students unveil the new kiosk where the Appalachian NST crosses Route 12 near the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller NHS near Woodstock, VT. NPS photo.



linking trail. When the CTPP review panel saw these five steps, they ascertained that only the first could be carried out in year one, so the project was split into two phases.

The first year's funding of \$60,000 was used to plan the trail corridor, and the second year's funds of \$60,000 brought in youth crews, training, and information kiosks. As of this writing, the plan is completed, but several town and landowner approvals are still pending. The planners found several viable alternatives, all of which were enthusiastically supported by the community. In this process several active local groups generously donated time for field work, research, analysis, and public meeting presentations. Meanwhile, the park's expanded ranger capacity has presented new programs, such as eight 3-hour hiking events called "Appalachian Trails and Tales." And a new in-park video features this proposed trail link, educating both local folks and visitors from a distance to its value to both the park and the AT. However, the trail link itself still must be constructed.

Because the trail link is not yet in place, it is hard to evaluate its benefits. Already exploratory hikes have involved many area young people, and there is potential to involve the headquarters staff of the nearby Student Conservation Association. The Vermont Conservation Corps has helped extensively with field work. So far the project's biggest benefits have been partnership and constituency development – engaging trail groups and teachers by exploring new perspectives. The park is already strengthening health connections through the "Healthy Eating-Active Living Challenge" with local medical practitioners. This project, when completed, will help achieve desired community health benefits.

Project Contact: Christina Marts, Assistant Superintendent,  
Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller NHS.

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## **2009**

### **A Trail to Every Classroom (TTEC)**

#### **Appalachian National Scenic Trail and various NPS Sites**

This innovative educational program seeks to promote the multi-disciplinary values of the Appalachian NST – and, in fact, all the components of the National Trails System – through teacher institutes. The Appalachian National Scenic Trail (AT) is located within a day's drive of 90 million Americans – and many of them are young people who today have few opportunities to enjoy the outdoors. This program brings the AT into their classrooms. It received funding from CTPP three years in a row, each year with a different emphasis.

The TTEC program went to scale in 2007 and 2008 with increased regional teams of teachers and the addition of local workshops. The local workshops really make the Trail a relevant teaching resource, and the local partner connections are invaluable to the creation and implementation of curriculum with service-learning components. A core set of active partners have added rigor and professionalism to the program.

For FY 2008, \$100,000 supported a three-season professional development program. The week-long summer Institute, with pre- and post-Institute regional workshops and links to local trail chapters, involved 51 K-12 teachers who could earn graduate credits through Lebanon Valley College. Special emphasis was placed on links to NPS units



along the Trail. In addition, funding covered a 5-year strategic plan, a program website, increased staff support, and small grants for teachers to use in implementing their individual curricula.

For FY 2009, \$68,950 enabled TTEC staff to share the program with the Iditarod NHT in Alaska, the Continental Divide NST in the Rocky Mountain states, and the Mississippi River Trail Association mid-continent. Also, a training program for trail volunteers and agency staff was offered so that they could be full partners to TTEC teachers. USDA Forest Service participants from eight national forests made presentations to local workshops and also came to the TTEC Summer Institute to serve as resource experts for teachers as they developed their own curricula.

For 2010, \$100,000 was used primarily to expand the program into the USDA Forest Service and several of the national trails it administers or manages.

During these years, a variety of funders augmented these funds through program-specific grants, including the John Ben Snow Foundation, the National Park

Foundation, the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and the Virginia Environmental Endowment. In addition, corporate sponsors who provided equipment and in-kind services included LEKI poles, Recreational Equipment, Inc. (REI), Len Foote Hike Inn, and Mountain Lake Resort. In fact, the project exceeded expected matching donations in funds raised, discounts on lodging, meals, materials, and in-kind services from volunteers and agency staff.



Spring, 2008, TTEC workshop at Amicalola Falls State Park in Georgia. NPS photo.

Each year TTEC is evaluated by the Place-Based Education Evaluation Collaborative (PEEC). The 2007 evaluation indicated that the sustained use of the curriculum is directly related to support by local partners (trail clubs, state agencies, etc.). See current PEEC evaluations at [www.peecworks.org](http://www.peecworks.org).

Staff evaluations show increased knowledge of the Trail and public lands by teachers. Most are aware of the national and state forests and parks around them (but there is still some confusion about the difference between the USDA Forest Service and the National Park Service.) Knowledge of the National Trails System really took off when other trails were engaged and the Iditarod NHT and Continental Divide NST partnerships started up.

During the five years of the program, an estimated 15,000 students have benefitted from this educational outreach. Teachers and administrators state that students are much

more engaged in learning through TTEC-related curriculum, especially “special needs” students, than in normal school-based learning. (This data so far is only anecdotal – a systematic measure of educational benefits is still to be developed.) The program’s major benefit so far seems to be raising awareness about the Appalachian National Scenic Trail in local communities and engaging students who then get their families hiking.

One small spin-off at the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller NHS (see p. 13) occurred when several Woodstock, Vermont-area TTEC teachers developed their curricula specifically around the nearby section of the Appalachian NST and then banded together to replace the information kiosk along the AT where the new connecting trail to Woodstock will occur. It was unveiled at National Trails Day, 2010.

Project contacts: Rita Hennessy and Jessica Liptak, Appalachian Trail NST Office, Harpers Ferry, WV.

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## Lions Park Trail and Transportation Hub

### Zion National Park, Moab, UT Old Spanish NHT and Slickrock NRT

This multi-faceted project near the town of Moab, Utah, and Arches National Park capitalizes on the fact that Moab is one of the premier locations for mountain biking in the world. The purpose of the project is to create a trail and transportation hub to safely integrate non-motorized recreation and alternative transportation to reduce traffic congestion near Moab. It also connects land and water trail opportunities to create a vibrant non-motorized transportation system. The project is located where one national scenic byway – the Dinosaur Diamond Prehistoric Byway on State Highway 191 – intersects with the state designated Colorado River Byway on Highway 128.



Engineers examine site drawings for constructing the Lions Park Transportation Hub. NPS photo.

The Lions Park Planning Group is a remarkable partnership consisting of representatives from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), City of Moab, Grand County, Lions Club, Moab Trails Alliance, Trail Mix, NPS, and Utah Sovereign Lands. With the help of NPS Intermountain Region RTCA staffer Marcy DeMillion, the Planning Group was well positioned to apply these funds to a project benefitting the town of Moab and Arches National Park with links to both the Old Spanish NHT and the Slickrock NRT, improving Lions Park to serve as a welcoming gateway to Moab, a trail and transit hub, and a community use facility.

The Planning Group developed a unique set of evaluation criteria to measure the project's long term success:

- Effective interpretation about the Old Spanish National Historic Trail.
- Public understanding of adjoining river ecology and restoration efforts.
- Public appreciation for the significant cultural and natural resources of the site.
- Easily accessed information about local trail and recreation opportunities.
- Expanded linkages to nearby trails to create a trail system
- Leveraging to raise additional funds to complete the project.  
(The project is now ranked number one on a list of projects that will receive Utah Transportation Enhancement funds.)
- An expanded number of partners to help complete the project.

The grant specifically funded a master plan for the 169-acre site, interpretive planning, and construction drawings that capitalize on a recently completed bicycle-pedestrian bridge across the Colorado River. Matching volunteer hours, in-kind services, and equipment was projected to be worth \$70,000 and has been delivered as promised. Since the grant was made, the City of Moab has expanded its vision for the site to encourage special events such as weddings, reunions, and concerts. In addition, structures such as solar bathrooms will make it a model of sustainable design. The project site design plans are now completed, however contracting delays by the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) has meant that construction level drawings cannot be completed until the engineering is finalized.



New Colorado Trail bridge links Lions Park to Arches National Park. NPS photo.

In the summer of 2010, the site and landscape design work was about 60% complete, and the complex partnership supporting this project has remained vibrant. It is too soon to tell what the project's most valuable benefits will be, but already it has been nominated as one of two Sustainable Sites Initiative awardees for Utah. In a later phase, partners and UDOT plan to construct a trail connection from Lions Park into the center of Moab, enabling visitors and residents to ride safely from Moab to access over 10 miles of separated or single-track trails.

Project Contact: Marcy DeMillion, NPS Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance Program, Salt Lake City, UT.



## Vista Management and Expanded Ridgerunner Program

Shenandoah National Park, Luray, VA

Appalachian NST

More than 100 miles of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail (AT) thread along the mountain crests of Shenandoah National Park in Virginia. This \$44,000 project attempted to achieve two goals simultaneously: open up overgrown vistas and augment volunteer patrols along the Trail. Based on a 2007 cultural landscape report of the Trail corridor through the park, the vista clearing emphasized historic viewpoints. The ridgerunners are a proven technique, using Leave No Trace practices, to foster visitor safety and outreach to reduce resource damage and aid in visitor appreciation of resource values.

The project funded two ridgerunners through the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club (PATC) and one temporary staffer to document vista projects. The ridgerunners also reported trail condition assessments on a regular basis back to PATC and the park. They worked 160 days, making contact with 1,958 day hikers, 1,081 overnight hikers, and 568 through hikers. They were able to remove several unauthorized fire rings and 40 gallons of trash. In many cases, the ridgerunners also worked on vista identification. Since then, the park has been able, through PATC, to have one ridgerunner each subsequent season.



Typical 50% obstructed view along the AT in Shenandoah National Park. NPS photo.

In the end, over 140 vistas were identified and most were incorporated into the Park's GIS mapping of significant vistas, with the photo mosaics of each view embedded in the GIS database for tracking over time. The park added \$3,500 to the project to complete the GIS work. The vista clearing has not yet occurred – in fact, a few vista photos were needed last fall while vegetation was still in leaf. Park staff developed a rating system to rank the most important work areas. Therefore, of all the vistas surveyed, about 40 are expected to be cleared once compliance is accomplished later this year. Most of the clearing will occur in 2011.

The benefits of this project have been many, including fostering visitor safety and contacts for the trail “hiking community,” having more “eyes and ears” alert to resource issues, and taking on the long-term project of vista clearing with a rational plan.

Project Contact: Steve Bair, Backcountry Wilderness and Trails Manager, Shenandoah National Park, Luray, VA.

## 2010 (all still in progress)

### Trail of Tears Wayside Exhibits at Stones River National Battlefield

By coincidence, the Civil War Battle of Stones River, near Murfreesboro, Tennessee, occurred on the Old Nashville Pike where the Cherokee Nation passed over a generation earlier during the Indian Removal from the southeastern states. In broadening its interpretive outreach, Battlefield staff decided to offer several wayside exhibits to describe the Trails of Tears where Union and Confederate forces later clashed December 31, 1862, to January 2, 1863.

In 1838, the United States Government forcibly removed more than 16,000 Cherokee Indian people from their homelands in Tennessee, Alabama, North Carolina, and Georgia, and sent them to Indian Territory (today’s Oklahoma). This tragic chapter in Cherokee history became known as the Trail of Tears. During the winter of 1838-39, one of the routes used by detachments of Cherokees traveling to Indian Territory passed through Murfreesboro along the Nashville Turnpike through lands eventually incorporated into Stones River National Battlefield and National Cemetery.

For several years the Eastern National bookstore in the Battlefield’s visitor center stocked a variety of Trail of Tears books and videos. The Trail of Tears passport stamp was also available there. Now, by adding three wayside exhibits, as well as Trail of Tears “Original Route” highway signs along the Nashville Turnpike, the Battlefield will offer the public a more complete understanding of this important layer of history on the local landscape.

The process of conducting research for the waysides was a joint effort by park staff, the National Trails System Office in Santa Fe, and the Center for Historic Preservation at



One of the wayside exhibit panels at Stones River NBP explaining the removal of the Cherokee People. NPS photo.



Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro. Wayside design and fabrication was managed through the Technical Assistance Program of the Harpers Ferry Center.

Two wayside exhibits are planned along the Pike at key pedestrian crossings. One of these is an entrance to the Murfreesboro Greenway System. These funds purchased research, design, fabrication, and bases – all now completed. Design and fabrication conform to Harpers Ferry Center’s standards. Battlefield staff will install the exhibits next spring.

The \$12,600 invested through this program was matched by \$3,000 worth of time to conduct research, identify graphics, develop text, and conduct preliminary designs contributed by the Center for Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee State University.

Project Contact: Stuart Johnson, Superintendent, Stones River National Battlefield, Murfreesboro, TN.

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## **Educational Programming at Cathlapotle Plankhouse**

### **Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge, Ridgefield, WA**

### **Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail**

This plankhouse was built in close consultation with the Chinook People who oversaw construction and provided remarkable cedar carvings. It opened in 2005 during the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial. Once established, it has proven valuable as a multi-cultural center and a place to help visitors – especially school children -- better understand the area’s plants and wildlife and their roles in Native American lifestyles.

Native American artists-in-residence are invited to provide classes suitable for local schoolchildren. They emphasize how local resources and native peoples played various parts in relation to the Lewis and Clark Expedition in 1805 and 1806. Each year it is a challenge to continue the Plankhouse’s educational programs, but the nonprofit Friends of Ridgefield Wildlife Refuge have been up to the task.



Tribal ceremony open to the public at the Cathlapotle Plankhouse in 2005 during the Lewis & Clark Bicentennial. NPS photo.



A summer camp group visiting the Plankhouse. Students learn that one of the main sources of information used to find the Cathlapotle Village site were Lewis and Clark’s journals. Photo courtesy U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service



As a result of this \$35,000 grant, educational programming at the Plankhouse doubled from the year before to reach 6,200 school kids. (However, unless similar funding appears again, the program will have to be downsized to fit the available funds.) Fortunately the Refuge's Friends group remains a strong and viable organization and will continue to raise what funds they can for the program and for the refuge.

The 2010 programs – limited to springtime months -- definitely offered participants a comprehensive picture of the significance of Lewis and Clark's Expedition in 1805 - 06. The children involved developed a direct connection to living history. These programs have proven of special interest to a nearby Native American Youth and Family Center. The 2010 funding has inspired the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to continue to grow the program, hopefully spreading it more throughout the year.

Project Contact: Eric Anderson, Outdoor Recreation Planner,  
Ridgefield Wildlife Refuge.

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## Stone Steps Spur Trail

**Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, Harpers Ferry, WV  
Appalachian NST**

About 15 years ago the Appalachian NST was relocated through the town of Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, so that hikers and other trail users could access the town and visit the headquarters of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy. Soon the park staff realized that a short link trail could also join the Trail to the nearby historic Lockwood House and its exhibits about the history of Harpers Ferry. However, this project required a long flight of stone steps.

Now this \$55,000 project is about 75% complete, with about 60 out of 81 steps installed. Stone was obtained from quarries in eastern Pennsylvania that nearly match the native Harpers Ferry stone and is the same stone used elsewhere on this stretch of the AT. This project brought together skilled volunteers, suitable stone, and knowledgeable park supervision. The Potomac Appalachian Trail Club provided the volunteers and stone cutting expertise.



PATC crews prepare the route and foundation for the Stone Steps from the Appalachian NST up to the Lockwood House. NPS photo.

After the first PATC work party, the first rise of steps indicates how the entire staircase will appear when completed in spring, 2011. NPS photo.



When completed in early 2011, this project will better link the “AT” to the Lockwood House and related buildings on the upper campus of the Park. It will also include a connecting trail coming back down a less steep grade to the AT alongside the Harpers Cemetery near Jefferson’s Rock. Staff evaluate the project as fully meeting the original project goals, with partners exceeding their promised match of volunteer labor.

Benefits anticipated by the Park and enjoyed by the public already include enhanced enjoyment, improved visual quality and erosion control, asset improvement, better safety, and enhanced visitor access. In short, this small project dramatically enhances the sustainability and durability of the “AT” within a steep, sensitive historic park environment.

Project Contact: Steve Lowe, Landscape Architect,  
Harpers Ferry National Historic Site.

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# Issues



Students help construct a new trail head kiosk where the AT crosses Route 12. The completed kiosk is shown on page 13. NPS photo.

Looking back over these three annual cycles of the CONNECT TRAILS TO PARKS Program, a number of issues appear as realities, constraints, and even handicapping limitations. In wrestling with them, we have developed some new sideboards to guide the program and improve its effectiveness.

**Project/Program** – The original intent of the program was to help with information services, such as wayside exhibits and movies, which helped link national trails to the parks and other Federal facilities along them. In fact, a wonderful variety of proposals expanded this vision, including multi-year educational programs. Worthy as they may be, our approach has evolved

so that CTTP funds will help such programs with a demonstration year or two – or with a project of special emphasis or new outreach – but that they will not subsidize an ongoing program that should be funded from a park’s or trail’s base. In no case will we fund different phases of the same project for more than three years. One change we have made recently is to structure the on-line proposal so that no submittal will be approved without the applicants completely addressing all the qualifying and selection criteria (see Appendices A and B).

**Facility/Non Facility** – In submitting project proposals into PMIS, a distinction is made between “facility” projects (constructed hardscape and structures, sidewalks and trail, wayside exhibit structures, etc.) and non-facility (educational programs, publications, traveling trunks, etc.) Facility projects within NPS have to be subjected to the Facility Management Software System (FMSS) and the Project Scoping Tool before they can be funded through PMIS. This takes some time, although to date, it has not delayed any project submittal. Projects at other Federal sites (not on NPS lands) are all considered “non-facility,” regardless of type. Another way to tilt the program towards small-scale non-facility projects was the reduction, after the first year, of the maximum project amount from \$150,000 to \$100,000.

**Interagency Funding** – In both FY 2009 and FY 2010 project submittals came in for projects at Federal facilities along NPS-administered trails, but not in NPS ownership. Some of them ranked quite high in the selection process. However, the Interagency



Reimbursable Agreement (RSA) process by which the funds are transferred to the other agencies – and the accountability by which it is tracked – have been cumbersome and fraught with delays. When a third party is involved, such as a contractor who goes into default, so much the worse. Several of these projects have taken an inordinate amount of administrative time to track and account for, discouraging interagency partnerships in the long-term.

**Project Coordination** – Certain projects each year result from more than just the two-way relationship between a park and a trail office. Sometimes a third party helps coordinate the project and ensure that it stays on schedule and track. Several NPS RTCA staffers have played key roles in such projects as Telling the Roosevelt-Vanderbilt and Hyde Park Trail Story (FY 2008) or the Lions Park Trail and Transportation Hub (FY 2009). Often a project benefits from having the oversight by such a third-party “broker.”

**Field Office Capacity** – Requiring that all project proposals be entered into PMIS creates a bottleneck in field offices which may be short staffed and/or unfamiliar with the subtleties and requirements of PMIS. This is equally true for smaller parks and many of the NPS trail offices. Each year the trail offices often prioritize among many possible projects for the ones they think will be the most successful and likely to obtain funding. Sometimes this creates resentment among other federal agency partners.

**Poor Reporting** – Theoretically one great advantage of PMIS is that project administrators can enter periodic status reports and, when the job is done, a close-out completion report that describes the project’s benefits and results (and glitches – if any). Alas, these reports take time and are often forgotten. At last count (December, 2010) for the FY 2008 projects (which should all have been completed September 30, 2009), 10 out of 14 completion reports had been entered. For FY 2009, only 5 out of 14. And for FY 2010, just three. Absent such reporting, the burden falls to WASO staff to periodically call the project contacts and find out what’s going on – a time-consuming (but very informative) exercise.

Monument Valley Zoo which adjoins Riverside Park, Scottsbluff, NE. NPS photo.



# Accomplishments



**Nationwide impact** – The national scenic and historic trail components of the National Trails System can be found in 49 of the 50 states, and NRTs are found in all 50 states. In the course of these three annual CTFP funding rounds, 40 projects were funded in 28 states. And in 2008 and 2009 they were competitive at the national level. Total funding in three years was a little over \$2.5 million, averaging \$62,800 per project. These 40 projects occur along six of the 11 national scenic trails (NSTs), 14 of the 19 national scenic trails (NHTs), and five national recreation trails (NRTs).

**Interagency cooperation** – From the beginning, the program was conceived as helping the entire National Trails System, not just the components and sites controlled by the National Park Service. For the first year, as a trial cycle, only NPS projects were considered. In the later two cycles, other agencies' submittals were encouraged and funded. Despite some complications and the normal mixed signals across agency lines, some of these projects have definitely created stronger interagency bonds around facility improvements, educational outreach, community involvement – better cementing together the administrative and management levels of these trails.

**Closer working relationships** – Similarly, these projects have created an inducement for park and trail offices to work together on joint projects. Often where a park interpretive program made little or no mention of the nearby national trail, one of these projects has helped join the two stories together. Good examples of this are the two themed trails at Pecos NHS that features the Santa Fe NHT along with several other themes of the park. In planning out the interpretive messages, both the trail and park staffs had to work in close collaboration. The few interagency partnerships receiving funding so far have also been fruitful.

**Better visibility of trail stories and connections** – One other benefit of this program has been the increased visibility of the National Trails System within or near NPS units. Sometimes this occurs as part of an educational program (A Trail to Every Classroom at Smoky Mountains National Park) or an interpretive facility (the wayside exhibits at Monument Valley just outside Scotts Bluff National Monument). Now there are well over 80 national parks where components of the National Trails System are found (let alone dozens more where there are NRTs). Thus, there is still plenty of opportunity for this program to help knit these two parts of the National Park System closer together.

## Next Steps



Each year this program has been adjusted to increase efficiency and spread its effects as widely as possible. In coming years, some additional adjustments may be made to continue this trend, whatever the funding levels turn out to be.

**Better announcement and outreach** – As soon as it is clear that another cycle of CONNECT TRAILS TO PARKS funding is available,

the administering office works hard to promote it through the NPS Servicewide Consolidated Call, by reminder e-mails, and through interagency contacts. Early 2011 offers a rich opportunity because projects anticipated for FYs 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015 are all encouraged to be entered into PMIS so that the CTTP program can “catch up” with similar internal grant programs that NPS tries to document 3-5 years ahead of the spending year.

**Tracking of projects** – This is a continual struggle. One technique to encourage reporting might be to give prizes to the first project contacts to enter status or completion reports. Another would be to learn how other similar programs handle this challenge. And another might be to deny a park or trail future funding if they do not do the necessary documentation of earlier awarded projects.

**Highlight the need** – The opportunity for creative and necessary projects eligible for this program is enormous. Often a third-party, such as an RTCA staffer or Friends group can help bring a park and trail together for a mutual project. One successful project in a region may inspire others in that region to apply with future project proposals. Often these projects are too small or newly identified to be shown in typical park or trail planning documents. Even so, the completed ones demonstrate the value of highlighting the creative and dynamic interface between the units of the National Park System (and associated Federal lands) and the components of the National Trails System.



## Appendix A – Qualifying Criteria

For projects to be considered for funding under this program they must meet certain basic criteria – some just format and process requirements -- and others location and program requirements. Since 2008 these have changed very little and today appear as pop-up boxes in PMIS when CTTP is selected as the funding source. In past years, whenever possible, if projects were submitted for consideration with poorly addressed qualifying criteria, WASO staff would work with submitting staff to ensure that their proposal did meet all these requirements.

The current list of CTTP Qualifying Criteria are:

- 1. **National Trail** – Is the project associated with one or more national scenic, national historic, or national recreation trails? If this is an NRT-related project, it must be located on National Park Service lands or waters. (Note: All three types of trails are created under the authorities of the National Trails System Act, 16 USC 1241-1251).
- 2. **Concurrence** – Parks submitting projects must include endorsement of the affected trail’s administrator. Trail offices submitting projects must include endorsement of the affected park’s superintendent or other Federal area manager.
- 3. **Maximum Cost** – The funds for one project (and all of its components) must be \$100,000 or less. (For FY 2008, this amount was \$150,000.)
- 4. **Timing** – Can the project be fully obligated by September 30 of the fiscal year being applied for (including meeting end-of-year deadlines that may come several months earlier) and be fully completed and installed by September 30 of the following fiscal year?
- 5. **Relationship to Relevant Planning Documents** – Does the project precede completion of the trail’s comprehensive management plan (CMP) or comprehensive interpretive plan (CIP)? (If so, the submission should explain how the project implements such plans. If the CMP or CIP has not been completed, explain how the project relates to the planning effort.)
- 6. **Compliance** – Has all necessary planning and compliance been completed for the project?
- 7. **Staff Costs** – Will any of this funding be used for permanent ONPS-funded staff salaries? (It can only be used for personnel costs involving volunteers, service centers, and seasonal and temporary workers.)

## Appendix B – Selection Criteria

These criteria are used when a review panel compares projects to determine which most fully carry out the purposes of the program.

- A. **Leveraging:** Receives matching funds or in-kind services from partners. In-kind services may include such elements as contributed volunteer hours, donated craftsmanship skills, and/or donated equipment and materials. Note: Such contributions need to be entered in PMIS as a separate project component. (max 5 points)
- B. **Evaluation:** Demonstrates how the intended goals and measurable results of the project will be determined. (max 4 points)
- C. **Volunteerism:** Enhances an area's, an organization's, and/or a trail's capacity to engage and retain volunteers. (max 4 points)
- D. **Promotion:** Highlights the entire National Trails System and/or the rest of the nearby component(s) of the National Trails System. (max 4 points)
- E. **Health and Fitness Benefits:** Fosters health and fitness. (max 3 points)
- F. **Outreach to Youth:** Effectively engages young people. (max 3 points)
- G. **Sustainability:** Features “green design” and sustainable construction and maintenance techniques. (max 3 points)
- H. **Networks:** Encourages connections to other nearby trails and trail systems. (max 2 points)

## Appendix C – 2008 CTTT Projects

Project Title	Trail(s)	Parks	Amount awarded
Interpretive Roadside Pullouts, etc.	SAFE	FOUN	\$150,000
Broaden Youth and Family Involvement ...	APPA & SEMO	Nationwide	\$150,000
Glorieta Battlefield Trail	SAFE	PECO	\$150,000
A Trail to Every Classroom	APPA	3 parks <sup>2</sup>	\$100,000
Telling the Roosevelt-Vanderbilt and Hyde Park Trail ...	Hyde Park NRT	ROVA	\$74,000
Making Conservation and Community ...	APPA	MABI	\$60,000
Development of Santa Fe NHT Orientation ...	SAFE	4 parks <sup>3</sup>	\$37,000
Telling the Trail Story at San Antonio Missions	ELTA	SAAN	\$24,500
Replace Reproduction Emigrant Wagon	OREG, CALI, MOPI, POEX <sup>1</sup>	FOLA	\$24,200
Columbia-Pacific Pathfinder	LECL	LEWI	\$23,000
Monument Valley Historic Trails Waysides, etc.	OREG, CALI, MOPI, POEX <sup>1</sup>	SCBL	\$20,000
Backpacking and Hiking Program	NOCO	DAAV & PIRO	\$13,000
A Lesson in Human Rights	TRTE	CHSC	\$7,400
Overmountain Victory NHT Trail Badge	OVVI	3 parks <sup>4</sup>	\$2,700
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$836,800</b>

### Notes

1. Oregon, California, Mormon Pioneer, and Pony Express NHTs
2. Great Smoky Mountains NP, Harpers Ferry NHS, and Delaware Water Gap NRA
3. Bent's Old Fort NHS, Fort Larned NHS, Fort Union NM, and Pecos NHS
4. Kings Mountain NMP, Cowpens NB, and Blue Ridge Parkway

### Trail Abbreviations

AT	Appalachian NST
CALI	California NHT
ELTE	El Camino Real de los Tejas NHT
LECL	Lewis & Clark NHT
MOPI	Mormon Pioneer NHT
NHT	National Historic Trail
NOCO	North Country NST
NRT	National Recreation Trail
NST	National Scenic Trail
OREG	Oregon NHT
OVVI	Overmountain Victory NHT
POEX	Pony Express NHT
SAFE	Santa Fe NHT
SEMO	Selma to Montgomery NHT
TRTE	Trail of Tears NHT

### Park Abbreviations

CHSC	Little Rock Central High School NHS, Little Rock, AR
DAAV	Dayton Aviation Heritage NHP, Dayton, OH
FOLA	Fort Larned NHS, Fort Larned, KS
FOUN	Fort Union National Monument, Watrous, NM
LEWI	Lewis and Clark NHP, Astoria, OR
MABI	Marsh-Billings-RockefellerNHP, Woodstock, VT
PECO	Pecos NHP, Pecos, NM
PIRO	Pictured Rocks NL, Munising, MI
ROVA	Roosevelt-Vanderbilt NHSs, Hyde Park, NY
SAAN	San Antonio Missions NHP. San Antonio, TX
SCBL	Scotts Bluff National Monument, Gering, NE



## Appendix D – 2009 CTTTP Projects

Project Title	Trail(s)	Parks	Amount awarded
“Get Outdoors! Wisconsin: On the Trail of the Ice Age” Movie	IATR	Ice Age Reserve unit	\$100,000
“Get Outdoors! Wisconsin: On the Trail of the Ice Age” Podcast	IATR	Downloadable anywhere	\$20,000
Glorieta Visitor Center to Sharpshooter’s Ridge Trail	SAFE	PECO	\$100,000
Planning and Coordination for Lions Park Trail and Transportation Hub	OLSP & Slickrock NRT	ARCH	\$100,000
Rehabilitate Historic Jessup Path	Dorr Mountain NRT	ACAD	\$99,000
Design Trail Bridge for Wallkill NWR	AT	Wallkill NWR	\$80,000
A Trail to Every Classroom	AT	AT	\$69,000
Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller	Connects to AT	MABI	\$60,000
Vista Management and Ridgerunner Program on AT	AT	SHEN	\$44,000
Partner With Adjoining State Parks to Improve Trails and Links to NRT	OVVI	KIMO	\$41,800
Educational Outreach to Students and Adults With Hands-On Traveling L+C Exhibit	LECL	Pompey’s Pillar NM	\$40,000
Monument Valley Historical Trails, Waysides, and Kiosks	OREG, CALI, MOPI, POEX	SCBL	\$20,000
Rehabilitate White Rock Falls Trailhead and Visitor Parking Area	Connects to AT	BLRI	\$14,000
Backpacking and Hiking Partnership for the North Country NST	NOCO	DAAV	\$6,570
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$836,700</b>

### Trail Abbreviations

AT	Appalachian NST
CALI	California NHT
IATR	Ice Age NST
LECL	Lewis & Clark NHT
MOPI	Mormon Pioneer NHT
NHT	National Historic Trail
NOCO	North Country NST
NRT	National Recreation Trail
NST	National Scenic Trail
OLSP	Old Spanish NHT
OREG	Oregon NHT
OVVI	Overmountain Victory NHT
POEX	Pony Express NHT
SAFE	Santa Fe NHT

### Park Abbreviations

ACAD	Acadia NP, Bar Harbor, ME
ARCH	Arches NP, Moab, UT
BLRI	Blue Ridge Parkway, NC and VA
DAAV	Dayton Aviation Heritage NHP, Dayton, OH
KIMO	Kings Mountain NMP, Blacksburg, SC
MABI	Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller NHP, Woodstock, VT
PECO	Pecos NHP, Pecos, NM
SCBL	Scotts Bluff National Monument, Gering, NE
SHEN	Shenandoah NP, Luray, VA

## Appendix E – 2010 CTPP Projects

Project Title	Trail(s)	Parks	Amount awarded
TTEC to the Forest Service	AT and Iditarod NHT	Forest Service sites	\$ 100,000
Complete Compliance for Wallkill River Bridge	AT	Wallkill NWR	\$100,000
Expanded Website, Star-Spangled Banner NHT	STSP	several	\$100,000
Parks as Classrooms at NATT	NATT	NATR	\$99,984
Connect JUBA to 3 S AZ NPS Sites	JUBA	3 NPS sites	\$96,000
Replace missing signs, etc.	Baptism Creek NRT	HOFU	\$65,146
New kiosk, pavilion, and entrance sign	CDNST	ROMO	\$59,750
Stone Steps spur trail	AT	HAFE	\$55,000
Explore the Outdoors, Lewis & Clark Education	LECL	Pompey's Pillar NM	\$45,205
Twin Arches Connector Trail	Twin Arches NRT	BISO	\$36,909
Educational Programming at Cathlapotle Plankhouse	LECL	Ridgefield NWR	\$35,000
Exhibits in 3 Parks	NOCO	3 parks	\$30,485
Unigrid brochure for STSP	STSP	FOMC, etc.	\$29,500
Trail of Tears Wayside Exhibits at STRI	TRTE	STRI	\$12,554
Transport students to Harpers Ferry NHP	AT, POHE	HAFE	\$7,700
Fort Circle Parks Brochure	POHE	ROCR, NCP-E	\$5,000
Nez Perce VIP-based Interpretation	Nez Perce NHT	NEPE	\$4,500
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$882,733</b>

### Trail Abbreviations

AT	Appalachian NST
CDNST	Continental NST
JUBA	Juan Bautista de Anza NHT
LECL	Lewis and Clark NHT
NATT	Natchez Trace NST
NHT	National Historic Trail
NOCO	North Country NST
NRT	National Recreation Trail
NST	National Scenic Trail
POHE	Potomac Heritage NST
STSP	Star-Spangled Banner NHT
TRTE	Trail of Tears NHT

### Park Abbreviations

BISO	Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area, Oneida, TN
FOMC	Fort McHenry National Memorial and Historic Shrine, Baltimore, MD
HAFE	Harpers Ferry NHS, Harpers Ferry, WV
HOFU	Hopewell Furnace NHS, Elverson, PA
NATR	Natchez Trace Parkway, Tupelo, MS
NCR-E	National Capital Parks – East, Washington, DC
NEPE	Nez Perce National Historical Park, Spalding, ID
NWR	National Wildlife Refuge
ROCR	Rock Creek Park, Washington, DC
ROMO	Rock Mountain National Park, Estes Park, CO
STRI	Stones River National Battlefield, Murfreesboro, TN

**National Park Service**  
**U.S. Department of the Interior**  
**National Trails System Program**

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