



NEWS

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Secretary Kempthorne Announces Designation of 24 New National Recreation Trails in 16 States

WASHINGTON— In the spirit of the 40th Anniversary of the National Trails System, Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne announced today that he has designated 24 trails in 16 states as new National Recreation Trails, adding more than 1,100 miles of trails to the National Trails System.

"One of my priorities at Interior is to reconnect American families to nature," said Kempthorne. "The National Trails System, including these additions, provides an excellent link to the outdoors, particularly for children. National Recreation Trails exemplify partnerships and are providing a path to fitness and stewardship for Americans of all ages."

The announcement coincides with the 16th annual celebration of National Trails Day on Saturday, June 7, 2008. The theme for this year, "Join Us on the Trail," encourages people of all ages to get outside and use trails for exercise and exploration. Thousands of trail enthusiasts will participate in hikes, educational programs, bike rides, volunteer repair projects, festivals, paddle trips, and trail dedications across the country. A complete schedule of activities is available at <http://americanhiking.org/NTD.aspx>.

National Recreation Trails (NRTs) have been a touchstone of the National Trails System since the first designations in 1971. The NRTs recognize existing trails that connect people to local resources and improve their quality of life.

Last June, the Department of the Interior celebrated National Trails Day with the announcement of 40 new NRTs in 22 States. Deputy Secretary Lynn Scarlett attended an event in Oregon at Baskett Slough National Wildlife Refuge to recognize the 1,000th NRT, the Rich Guadagno Memorial Trail. Since NRTs link communities to recreational opportunities on public lands and in local parks across the nation, this announcement promotes the National Park Service Centennial Initiative as well.

Each of the new trails will receive a certificate of designation and trail markers. They join a network of more than 1,000 trails encompassing more than 12,000 miles.

The NRT Program is jointly administered by the NPS Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program and the U.S. Forest Service in conjunction with a number of other federal and nonprofit partners, notably American Trails, which hosts the National Recreation Trail website at www.americantrails.org/nationalrecreationtrails.

The Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA) is a community resource of the National Park Service. RTCA staff provide technical assistance to community groups and local, state, and federal government agencies so they can conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. More information is available online at <http://www.nps.gov/rtca>.

Secretary Kempthorne designated the following 24 trails as National Recreation Trails:

Alabama

Alabama Scenic River Trail – Recognized as the nation’s longest one-state river trail stretching approximately 631 miles from the Coosa River to the Gulf of Mexico, this scenic water trail is a unique statewide recreational and tourism resource featuring numerous camping, hiking, and birdwatching opportunities.

Arizona

Black Canyon Trail – Located in the Bradshaw Mountain foothills of central Arizona and managed by a diverse partnership led by the Bureau of Land Management, this world-class hiking, mountain biking and equestrian trail system stretches over 62 miles, benefiting both residents of the Black Canyon Corridor and visitors from metropolitan Phoenix.

Florida

Apalachicola River Paddling Trail System – Stretching through the panhandle of Florida to the Gulf of Mexico, this nationally-recognized water trail system offers approximately 100 miles of scenic paddling trails for canoeists and kayakers of all abilities.

Illinois

Rend Lake Bike Trail – In addition to providing hiking, biking, and fishing opportunities, this meandering trail extends over 19 miles through some of the most diverse and scenic habitat that Southern Illinois has to offer.

Indiana

Burdette Park/University of Southern Indiana Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Nature Trail – This scenic .6-mile segment is the result of a visionary partnership to eventually provide a 2-mile non-motorized trail connection between popular Burdette Park in Vanderburgh County and the University of Southern Indiana.

Iowa

Great Western Trail – A key connection between urban Des Moines and the surrounding rural landscape, this 16.5-mile scenic rail-trail offers trail users the opportunity to journey through Iowa history while hiking, biking, or enjoying other recreational activities.

Mines of Spain State Recreation Area Trails System – Located just south of Dubuque along the Mississippi River, this approximately 20-mile trail system offers a wealth of opportunities for recreation, environmental education, human history interpretation, and wildlife observation.

Summerset Trail – Stretching almost 12 miles through rolling hills, river bottom wetlands, and remnant prairies, this rail-trail allows for hiking, biking, or cross-country skiing through some of the best of central Iowa's natural scenery.

Michigan

Musketawa Trail – Providing a handicapped-accessible connection between Marne and Muskegon, Michigan, this 24.7-mile rail-trail and greenway allows a variety of trail users to enjoy a range of landscapes while biking, snowmobiling, horseback riding, or simply taking a stroll.

Nebraska

Funk Peterson Wildlife Trail – Situated in Funk Waterfowl Production Area, this 3-mile backcountry loop trail is a bird watcher's paradise, providing habitat for millions of birds, including endangered whooping cranes and least terns that migrate biannually through the area.

New Mexico

Canyon Trail – Located in Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge, this 2.2-mile interpretive trail offers school groups and visitors year-round the ability to study tracks in the shifting sands, evidence of kangaroo rats, box turtles, and a host of other wildlife that call the refuge home.

Chupadera Wilderness Trail – Traversing the Chupadera Wilderness Area of the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge, this 9.5-mile backcountry trail is rich in wildlife and wildflowers, and takes hikers through a range of landscapes culminating in a 360-degree view of several mountain ranges.

North Carolina

Dismal Swamp Canal Trail – Recognized as part of the East Coast Greenway, this 4.5-mile multi-use trail features a variety of historic sites, abundant wildlife, and opportunities for biking, fishing, canoeing, and more.

Little Tennessee River Greenway – This 4.5-mile hiking and biking trail parallels the Little Tennessee River and Cartoogechaye Creek and features three different bridges and a variety of recreational facilities for visitors of all ages.

North Dakota

Arrowwood National Wildlife Refuge Leg of the Historic Fort Totten Trail – This 9-mile backcountry trail is undergoing improvements to provide enhanced wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities and allows for a variety of uses, including hiking, mountain biking, and horseback riding.

Scout's Trail – Situated within Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park, this 4.6-mile multi-use trail offers environmental education and interpretive opportunities on Native American culture amid scenic vistas and native prairie.

Sullys Hill Nature Trail – Located in one of only four units of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service managed to preserve bison, this 1.5-mile scenic loop trail provides visitors the opportunity to observe a diverse sampling of native wildlife whether jogging or snowshoeing.

Ohio

Congressman Ralph Regula Towpath Trail – Also known as the Ohio and Erie Canalway Towpath Trail, this 25-mile multi-use trail serves as the western spine of a planned 300-mile trail system throughout Stark County and offers a variety of recreational activities along a pathway rich in State history.

Pennsylvania

Heritage Rail Trail County Park – Traversing York County to the Maryland border, this 19-mile multi-use trail provides an integral link in a statewide trails system and epitomizes the concept of a close-to-home trail experience, but has regional, State, and national significance as well.

Susquehanna River Water Trail – Middle and Lower Sections – Flowing from Sunbury to the Maryland border, this 103-mile segment offers paddlers an exciting array of experiences, from observing great blue herons to learning about the Underground Railroad.

South Carolina

Congaree River Blue Trail – Starting near Columbia, this 50-mile water trail and greenway offers an urban adventure featuring prehistoric Native American sites, sandbars, high bluffs, and Congaree National Park, home of the largest continuous tract of old growth bottomland hardwood forest in the United States.

Texas

Heritage Trail Loop – Serving as the backbone of the city's trail system, this 3.1-mile rail-trail and bikeway links area residents to numerous recreational facilities, historical sites, and a local renewable energy demonstration project.

Lions Park Nature Trail – Given its artistic features, hilltop vistas, and recreational facilities, it is easy to see why this 2-mile walking trail is so popular with Temple residents of all ages.

West Virginia

Canaan Valley Institute Trail System – Located near the town of Davis, this 6.5-mile privately-owned multi-use trail system offers the public a variety of hiking, mountain biking, and equestrian trails, with additional connections planned to link to neighboring State and Federal lands.

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