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For Immediate Release

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COMPREHENSIVE ADMINISTRATIVE STRATEGY FOR THE OLD SPANISH NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL RELEASED

When many people in the West think about the Old Spanish Trail, they might think about history and culture. For the Old Spanish Trail Association (OSTA), the trail is also about tourism, exploration, adventure; and, challenges. Planning and installing identification signage and interpretive wayside exhibits, working to develop partnerships with museums and cultural centers, and protecting Trail resources, landscapes and values from the potentially detrimental effects of energy development, mining, commercial developments, and more are just a few of the issues confronting the trail in its six-state region.

An important part of OSTA's efforts has been consulting with the federal administrators for the Trail – the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the National Park Service (NPS) - on a management plan, required by the National Trails System Act. That plan is intended to guide the administration and management of the Trail on federal public lands, and on state, tribal, and local government lands, and private lands through cooperative efforts with such entities and individual landowners. After fifteen years of prolonged planning and discussions the BLM and NPS have released a Comprehensive Administrative Strategy for the Trail. The complete document can be downloaded here: <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/Final-OLSP-CAS>.

“This Comprehensive Administrative Strategy is the result of years of dedicated collaboration between BLM and NPS, with significant input from tribes, the Old Spanish Trail Association and its numerous local chapters, and other stakeholders,” said BLM-Utah State Director and OSNHT Co-Administrator Ed Roberson. “This strategy serves American communities by identifying opportunities to improve recreational access and collaborative educational efforts at many important historic sites on public lands. We hope this document will initiate conversations on how to best promote heritage tourism associated with the trail across the western United States.”

John Hiscock, OSTA's Association Manager, said the strategy is a good start for planning. "One of the challenges we always face is basic awareness and knowledge of the American public and communities along the Trail of its historic legacy and designation as part of the federal National Trails System. We're always working to educate, inform, and build partnerships for the Trail and the public, and the CAS will help us in a more concrete way. The CAS should help establish a better understanding of federal administrative oversight of the Trail. Joining in partnerships for signage and recreational awareness and development along the Trail, as envisioned in the CAS is just one way the public and communities can help.”

Hiscock also added that “although development and adoption of the CAS is unique within the National Trails System, as opposed to Comprehensive Management Plans issued for other national trails, its authorization and publication is a positive step toward minimizing impacts on, and protecting the congressionally designated National Trail, as intended by federal law.”

The issuance of the CAS is appropriate at this time – the 15th anniversary of the designation of the OSNHT (2002), and 50th anniversary of the guiding management law of the National Trails System Act (1968).

The Old Spanish National Historic Trail (OSNHT) was designated by Congress and President George W. Bush in 2002, and OSTA has been active in education, research, and preservation of the trail and its environment. The designation of the OSNHT recognized its unique place in our country’s history, increasing public awareness of such history, and promoting the potential of the Trail for recreational enjoyment of the outdoors. The legislation identified four major historic routes totaling some 2,700 miles, extending from Santa Fe, New Mexico, to Los Angeles, California, passing through six western states including Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico and Utah. The trail commemorates the commercial trading activities between Nuevo Mexico and Alta California that began in 1829 and ended around 1848, when the southwest was a part of the nation of Mexico. Much more information about the trail can be found at <http://www.oldspanishtrail.org>.