



# The Old Spanish National Historic Trail

Recreation and Development Strategy, Mesa and Delta Counties, Colorado

**DRAFT**



United States Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management-National Park Service  
May 2018





# Old Spanish National Historic Trail

## Recreation & Development Strategy

Dear Reader,

The purpose of this Old Spanish Trail Recreational Development Strategy is to explore different possibilities for local communities to bring the Old Spanish National Historic Trail to life in Mesa and Delta counties, Colorado. The Old Spanish National Historic Trail, which was designated by the U.S. Congress in 2002 under the authority of the National Trails System Act, recognizes the 2,700 mile-long trade route between Santa Fe, New Mexico and Los Angeles, California throughout the 19th century. This strategy identifies potential projects that could enable the public to find, follow, and experience the trail throughout these two counties in western Colorado. The Old Spanish National Historic Trail has a diverse, unique and rich history, and the recreational activities associated with the trail in these two counties are primarily motorized and associated with the nearby state highways.

This strategy is not a decisional or land use planning document that requires conformance with the National Environmental Policy Act, nor will this strategy preclude other multiple uses of nearby public lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Public lands adjacent to and within viewing distance of the recreational routes identified in this strategy will continue to be managed in accordance with the BLM's multiple-use mission established in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, other applicable federal statutes, and the applicable BLM Resource Management Plan.

We would like to thank the numerous local, regional, and national stakeholders that participated in the development of this strategy, and we hope that this document establishes a strong foundation for future on-the-ground partnerships that will celebrate Colorado's rich cultural heritage.

Sincerely

Rob Sweeten

BLM Old Spanish Trail Co-Administrator/  
Historic Trails Lead Utah State Office

Aaron Mahr

Superintendent  
National Trails Intermountain Region-NPS

**Prepared For :**

The Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Mesa County, Delta County, and the Old Spanish Trail Association (see p. 10).

**Prepared By :**

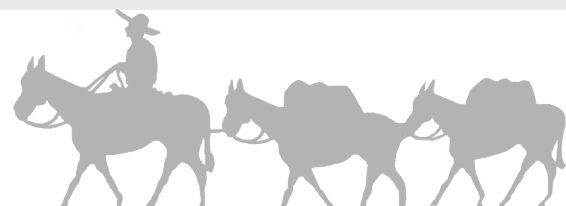
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American Conservation Experience  
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**Funded by a grant from the partnership for the National Trails System**



Photo by: Kirk Rasmussen

**Above: Fish Lake Cutoff  
Cover Photo: Castle Rock in Rabbit Valley**





# Old Spanish National Historic Trail

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# Introduction





# Old Spanish National Historic Trail

## Recreation & Development Strategy Participants

**Delta County**



**Colorado Electric Bikes**



**Mesa County**



**Colorado Plateau Mountain  
Bike Trail Association, Inc**



**Grand Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization**



**Bureau of Land Management**



**Old Spanish Trail Association**



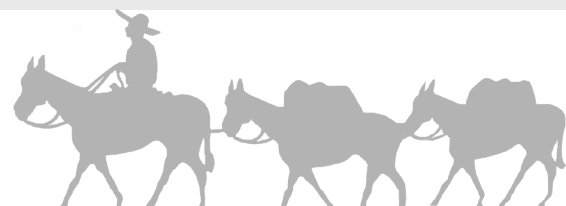
**Partnership for the National Trails System**



**Old Spanish NHT Administration**



**Museums of Western Colorado**





# Old Spanish National Historic Trail

## Project Background: Trail History

In 1968, the National Trails System Act opened the door to federal involvement in long distance trails. Today, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), along with the National Park Service (NPS), the US Forest Service, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service, are responsible for the administration and management of National Historic Trails (NHT).

National historic trails are trails that have historic significance to the nation and can only

be designated by an act of Congress. There are currently 19 in the United States.

The Old Spanish NHT became the 15th National Historic Trail after Congress adopted Senate Bill 1946 and President George W. Bush signed the legislation in December 2002. The Old Spanish NHT is co administered by both the Bureau of Land Management and the National Park Service. Today, the Old Spanish NHT is widely known as the "longest, most arduous, and

crookedest pack mule route in America." (Hafen and Hafen, 1993)

From 1829 to 1848, traders knew the trail as the most feasible path between Los Angeles and Santa Fe for traveling caravans. The trail provided a trade route for quality woolen goods produced in New Mexico which were traded for a surplus supply of horses and mules raised on California's ranchos.

Trade with American Indians was also prominent along the trail, including an extensive slave trade of American Indian women and children who were forced to become domestic servants for ranchers in New Mexico and California. Explorers of the Old Spanish NHT established the route along a loose network of American Indian footpaths that crossed the wide expanse of the Rocky Mountains, the Colorado Plateau, the Mojave Desert, and the Transverse Ranges and coastal valleys of southern California.

1598



**1598**  
Don Juan de Oñate establishes San Juan de los Caballeros near Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo in New Mexico

**1765**  
Juan María Antonio Rivera explores southwestern Colorado and southeastern Utah

**1776**  
Francisco Atanasio Domínguez and Silvestre Vélez de Escalante follow Rivera's route to the Great Basin in Utah

**1774**  
Father Francisco Hermenegildo Garcés explores a path to the California missions, and reaches Mission San Gabriel by following the Mojave River



**1610**  
Don Pedro de Peralta founds Santa Fe, New Mexico

**1825**  
Antoine Robidoux constructs Fort Uncompahgre near Delta, Colorado.



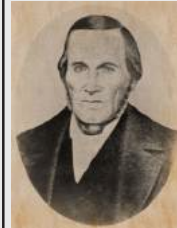
**1826**  
Jedediah S. Smith leads a party of fur trappers southwest from Utah to southern California

**1821**  
Mexico gains its independence from Spain



**1829**  
Antonio Armijo leads trade party from Abiquiú to Los Angeles, blazing the Old Spanish Trail

**1831**  
William Wolfskill (pictured below) and George C. Yount establish a route that ascends into central Utah before heading southwest into California



**1834**  
José Avieta and 125 men arrive at Los Angeles with woolen goods to trade for horses and mules.



**1839**  
José Antonio Salazar arrives in California with a group of 75 men. Francisco Quintana carries domestic goods worth \$78.25

**1837**  
Julian Chávez arrives in Los Angeles via the Old Spanish Trail. Later acquires property in present-day Elysian Park area.

**1841**  
Regular trade caravan is led by Francisco Estevan Vigil

**1843-44**  
Juan Arce hauls merchandise worth \$487.50 and Francisco Rael leads sheep worth \$1,748

**1842**  
40 New Mexicans from Abiquiú settle at Agua Mansa and Politana in California; 194 men lead 4,150 California animals back to New Mexico

**1848**  
Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ends Mexican-American War, Gold Rush begins

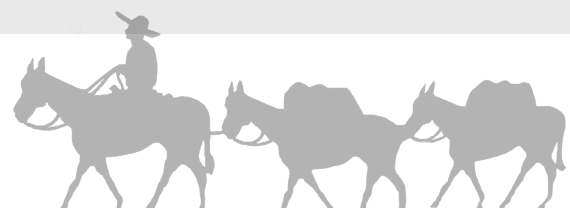
**1849**  
Commercial caravans across Old Spanish Trail cease and varied routes develop

**1846**  
Mexican-American War begins



2002

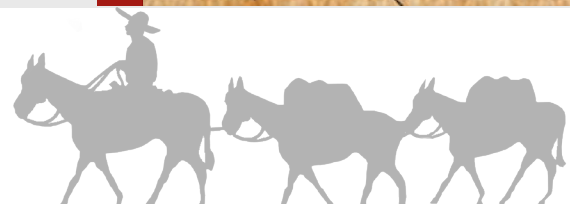
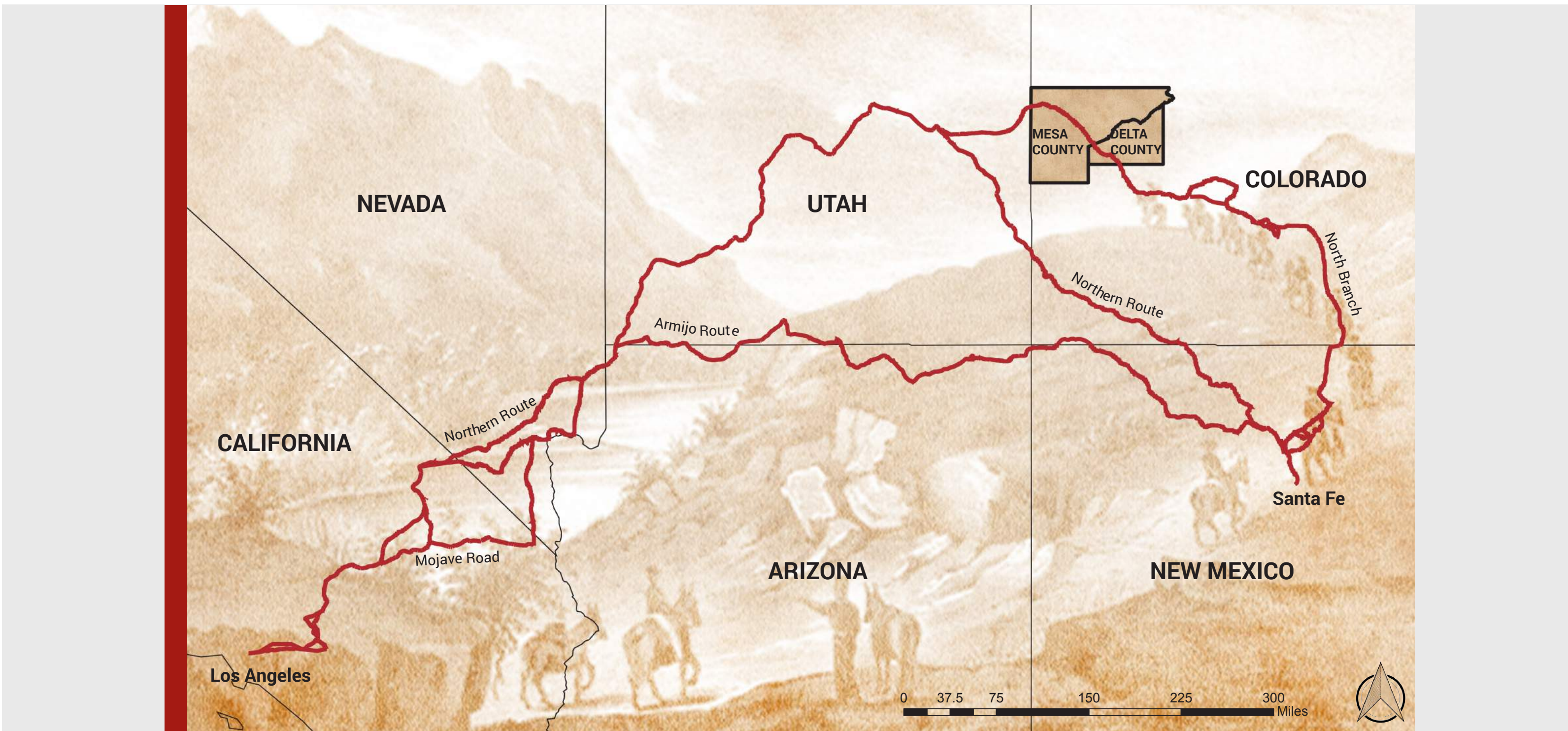
**2002**  
The Old Spanish National Historic Trail is designated by Congress





# Old Spanish National Historic Trail

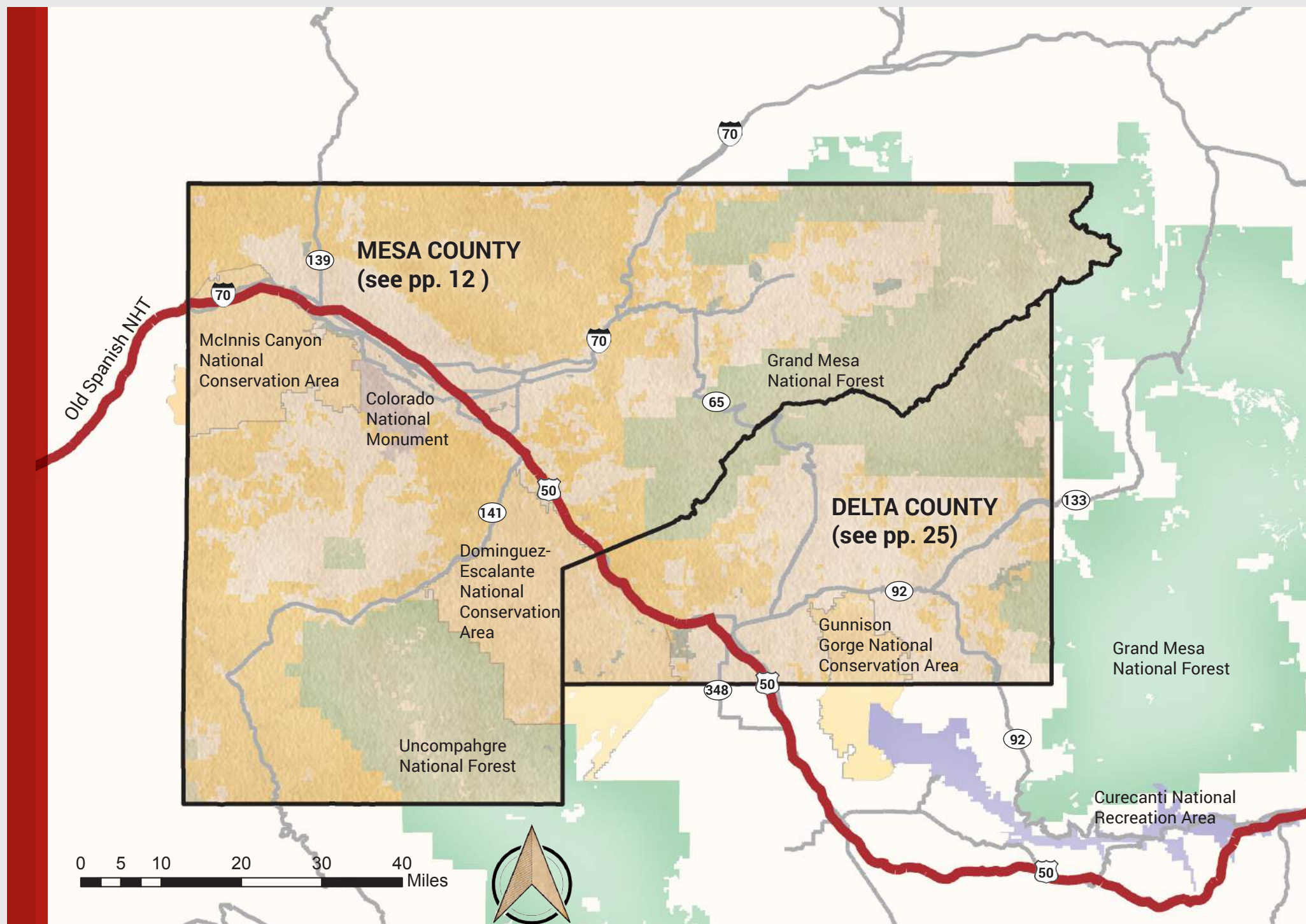
## Trail Alignment - 2018





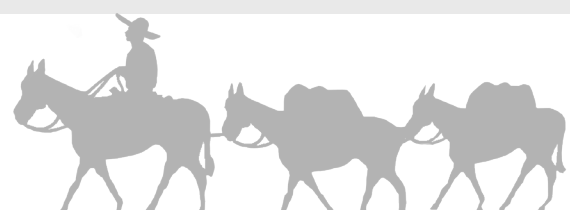
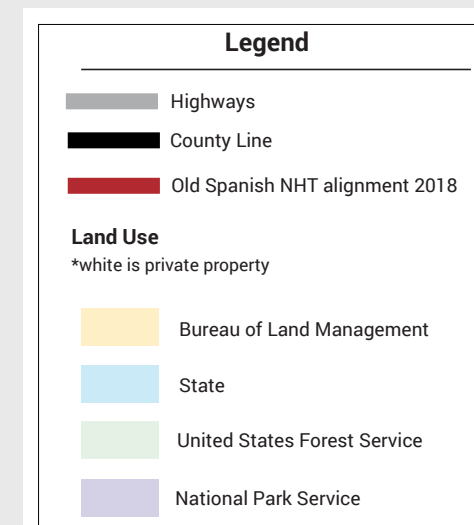
# Old Spanish National Historic Trail

## Regional Context



### Map Summary

The solid red line marks the congressionally recognized route of the Old Spanish Trail.





# Project Overview





# Old Spanish National Historic Trail

## Project Process



Meeting with Trail stakeholders in Grand Junction, Colorado

In order to accomplish the goal of bringing the Old Spanish NHT to life, local residents, professionals, city and county officials, the Old Spanish Trail Association, and government agencies from various backgrounds came together to discuss and visit the trail and identify interpretive, educational, and recreational opportunities in the Delta and Mesa counties.

BLM held a meeting on April 10, 2018 in Grand Junction, CO, where draft maps were presented and feedback was collected from attendees. This meeting was held with partners from the counties to gather additional information about sites and opportunities for interpretation and recreation along the Old Spanish NHT. The National Park

Service, Utah BLM State Office, and the Grand Junction Field Office, visited critical sites along the Old Spanish NHT during this meeting.

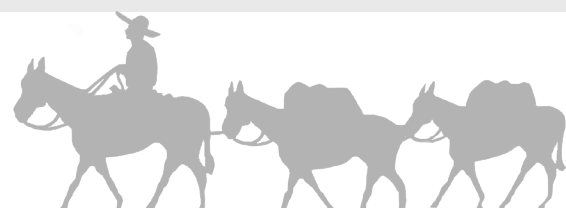
One outcome of this discussion and input was the identification of Old Spanish NHT sites and segments that exist throughout the Mesa and Delta counties that could be developed for the public. Trail sites include proposed trailheads, overlooks, and prime interpretive locations. Trail segments include proposed hiking/biking/equestrian trails, 2WD routes, 4WD routes, and ATV routes. The development of these elements within the county will make the trail accessible to the public and provide opportunities for them to interact with and learn about the Old Spanish NHT.



Viewing the landscape over the Gunnison River

This strategy also includes sites and other points of interest outside of the Old Spanish NHT's period of significance of 1829 through 1848. These areas of interest serve to illuminate local history and add to the overall recreational experience of the public. In these

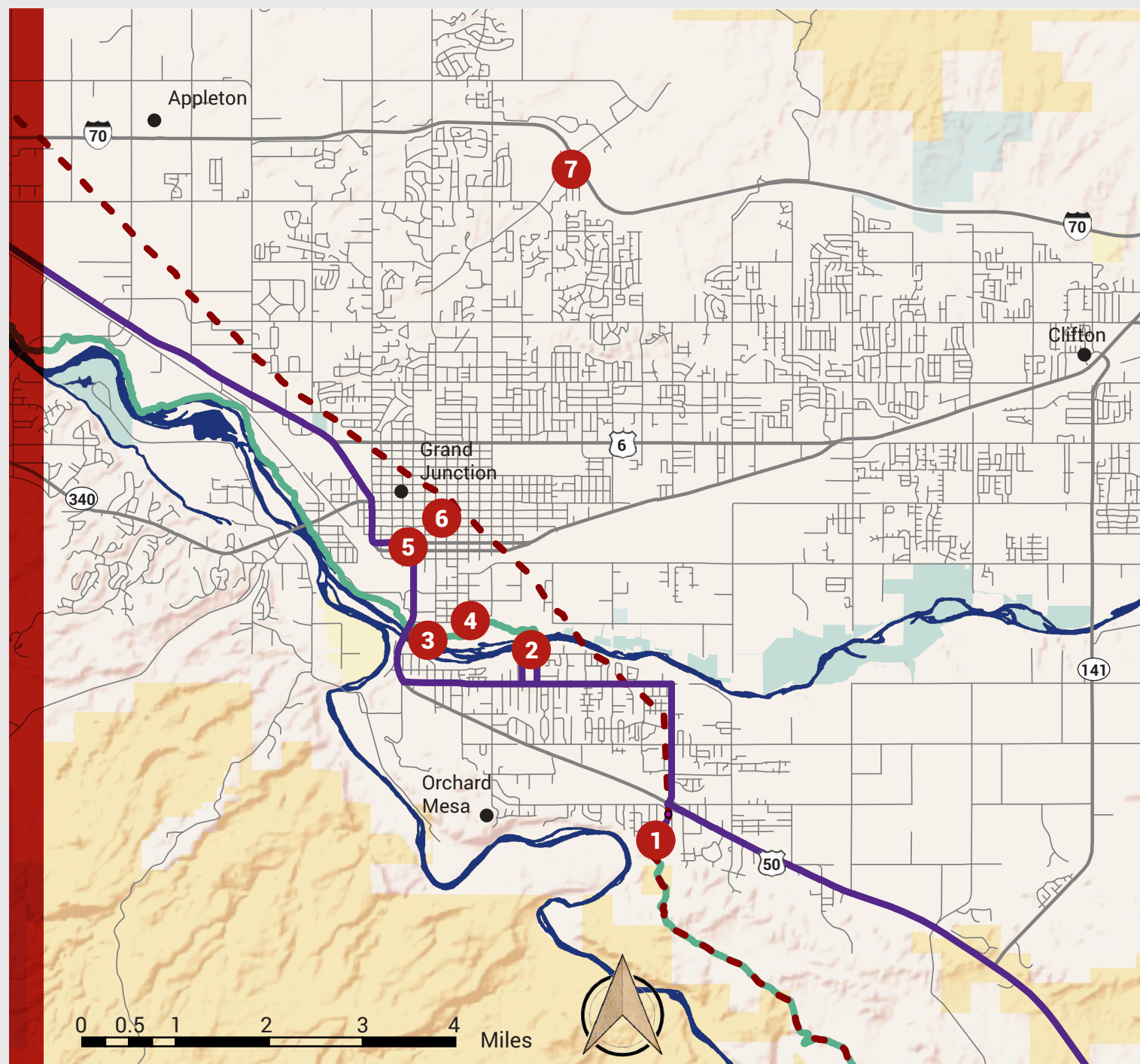
instances there is some historic continuity with the Old Spanish NHT and long term routing and travel themes.





# Old Spanish National Historic Trail

## Map and Legend Example



## Document Sections

The **Introduction** section gives background information about National Historic Trails and the Old Spanish NHT, defines project boundaries, and describes the project's process.

The **Project Overview** sections show an overview map of the Old Spanish NHT and of the project area.

The **Mesa and Delta Counties** Sections of the congressionally designated Old Spanish NHT are addressed individually. Each area is shown on a map and then described in detail. Existing and proposed trail elements, such as inscriptions, trailheads, and waysides, are shown. Connections to other recreational and cultural resources in close proximity to the Old Spanish NHT are also identified.

The **Appendix** section describes typical recreational trail elements, as well as the range of alternative development, from primitive, to rustic, to developed. It also contains a trail chart and examples of the standard authorized signage for the Old Spanish NHT.

## Map and Legend Explanation

**Proposed NHT Site:** Sites that have yet to be developed specifically for the Old Spanish NHT. Suggested development components often include Old Spanish NHT interpretation and signage to be added to a proposed site.

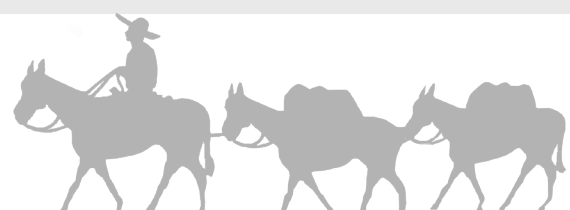
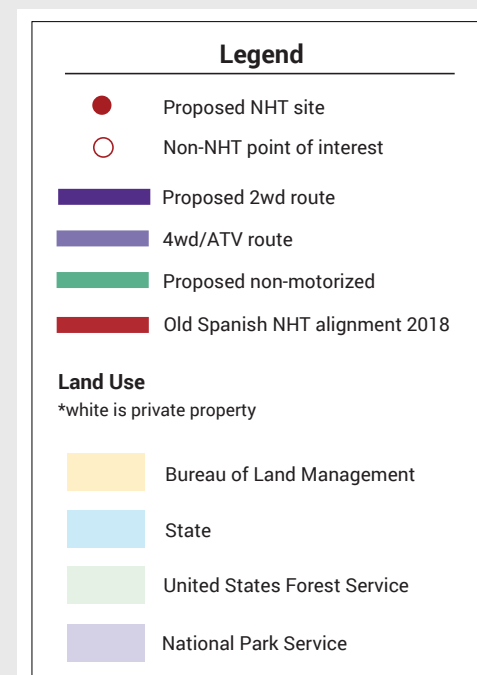
**Non-NHT Point of Interest:** These are sites that are along, or within close proximity to the 1829 - 1848 period of significance of the Old Spanish NHT that are not related to the Old Spanish NHT. These sites are developed and ready for visitor access.

**4WD/ATV route and 2WD route:** 4WD/ATV trails or 2WD Auto Tour Routes. Further explanation of the type of trail is described on Trail Element pages.

**Proposed Non-Motorized Trail:** Non-motorized trails include biking, hiking, or equestrian trails or any combination. Further explanation of the type of trail is described on Trail Element pages.

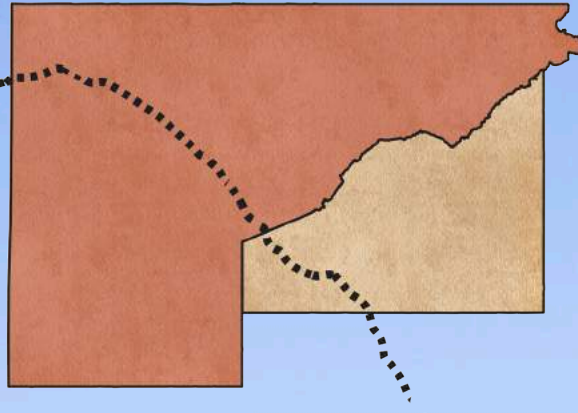
**Highway route:** Highway Auto Tour Routes that follow closely the Old Spanish NHT.

**Lands Status:** Colors indicate who owns or manages a particular parcel or parcels of public land.



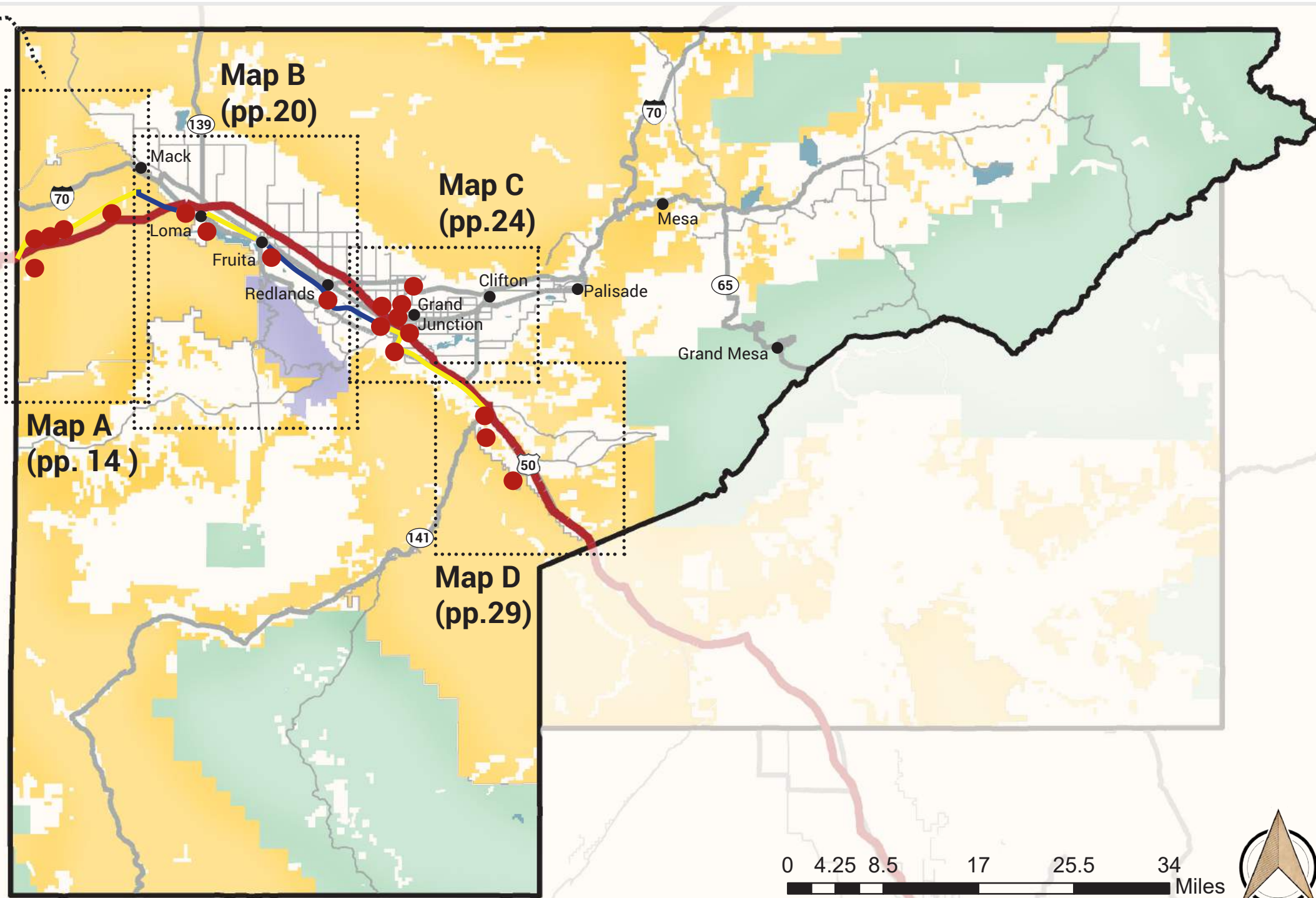
# Mesa County

*Trail Segment Details*





# Overview Map of Mesa County

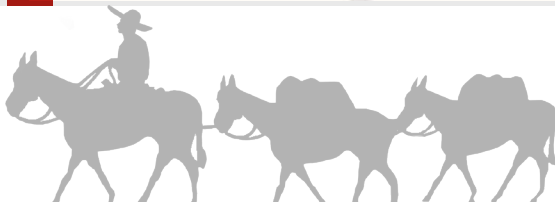
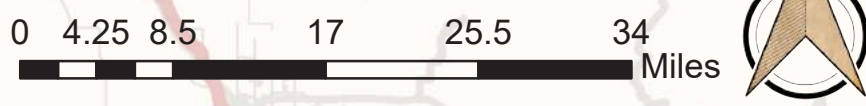


**Legend**

- Proposed NHT site
- Non-NHT point of interest
- Proposed 2wd route
- 4wd/ATV route
- Proposed non-motorized
- Old Spanish NHT alignment 2018

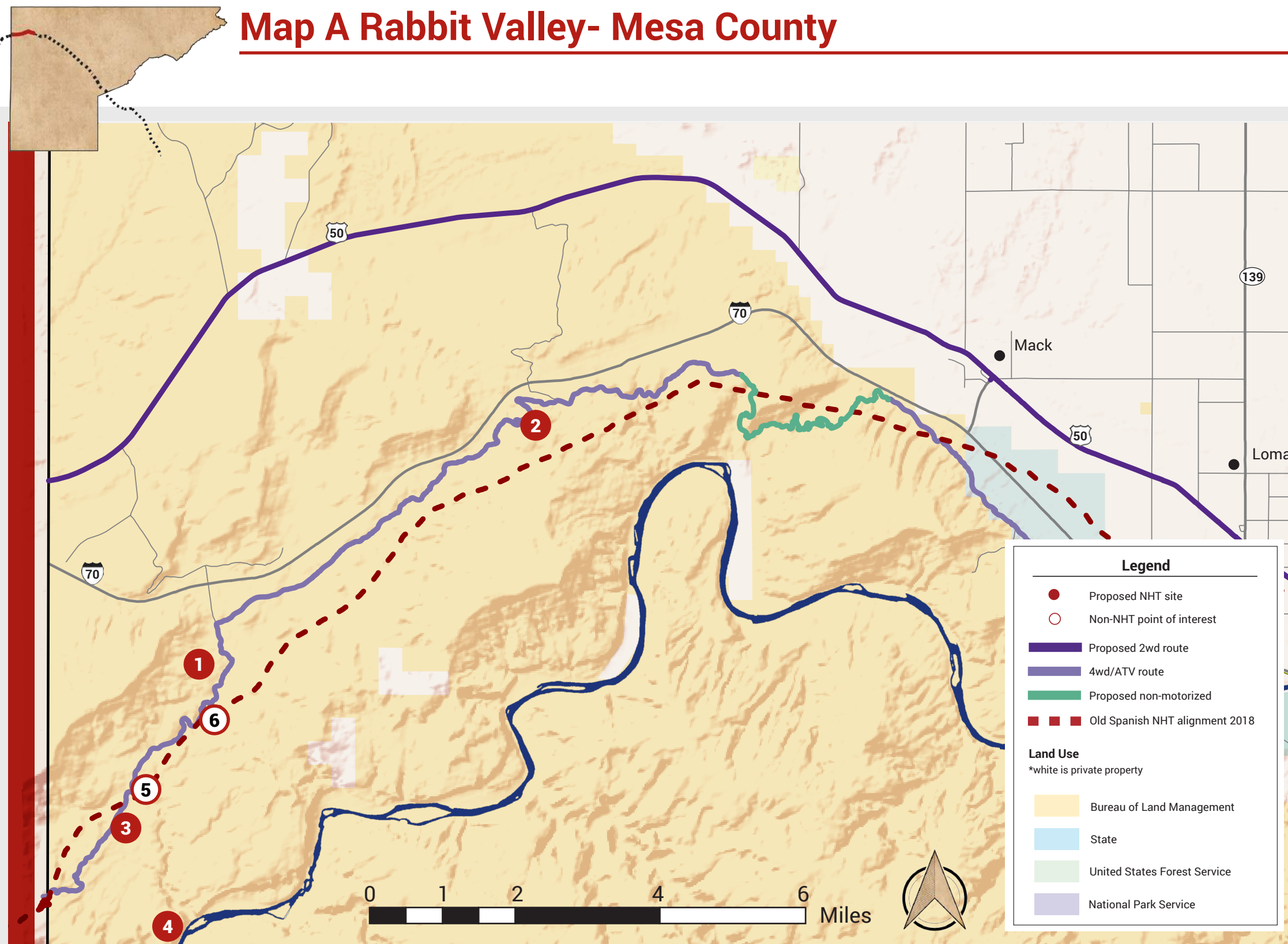
**Land Use**  
\*white is private property

- Bureau of Land Management
- State
- United States Forest Service
- National Park Service





# Map A Rabbit Valley- Mesa County



### Existing Trail Elements:

- 1 Interpretive Media Joufflas Campground

### Proposed Trail Elements:

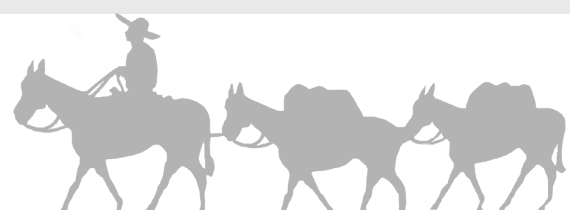
- 2 Rabbits Ear Trail Head
- 3 Castle Rock
- 4 Knowles Overlook

### Other Points of Interest Along the Trail:

(Non-Old Spanish NHT related)

- 5 McDonald Creek Trail
- 6 Joufflas Horse Trail

See pp. for detailed trail element descriptions



## Mesa County- North Branch of the Old Spanish NHT

### Map A - Rabbit Valley Proposed Trail Elements

1

#### Interpretive Media at Joufflas Campground

**Development Opportunities:**

The Joufflas Campground in the McInnis Canyon National Conservation Area has eight campsites. This is a fee-free, highly trafficked campground with picnic tables, fire grates, and bathrooms. Near the bathrooms, there is existing interpretive media that highlights the Joufflas family, Grazing in the McInnis Canyon National Conservation Area, and early uses of the land, including the

Old Spanish NHT.

**Suggested Actions for Implementation:**

- Enhance and improve existing campground and facilities

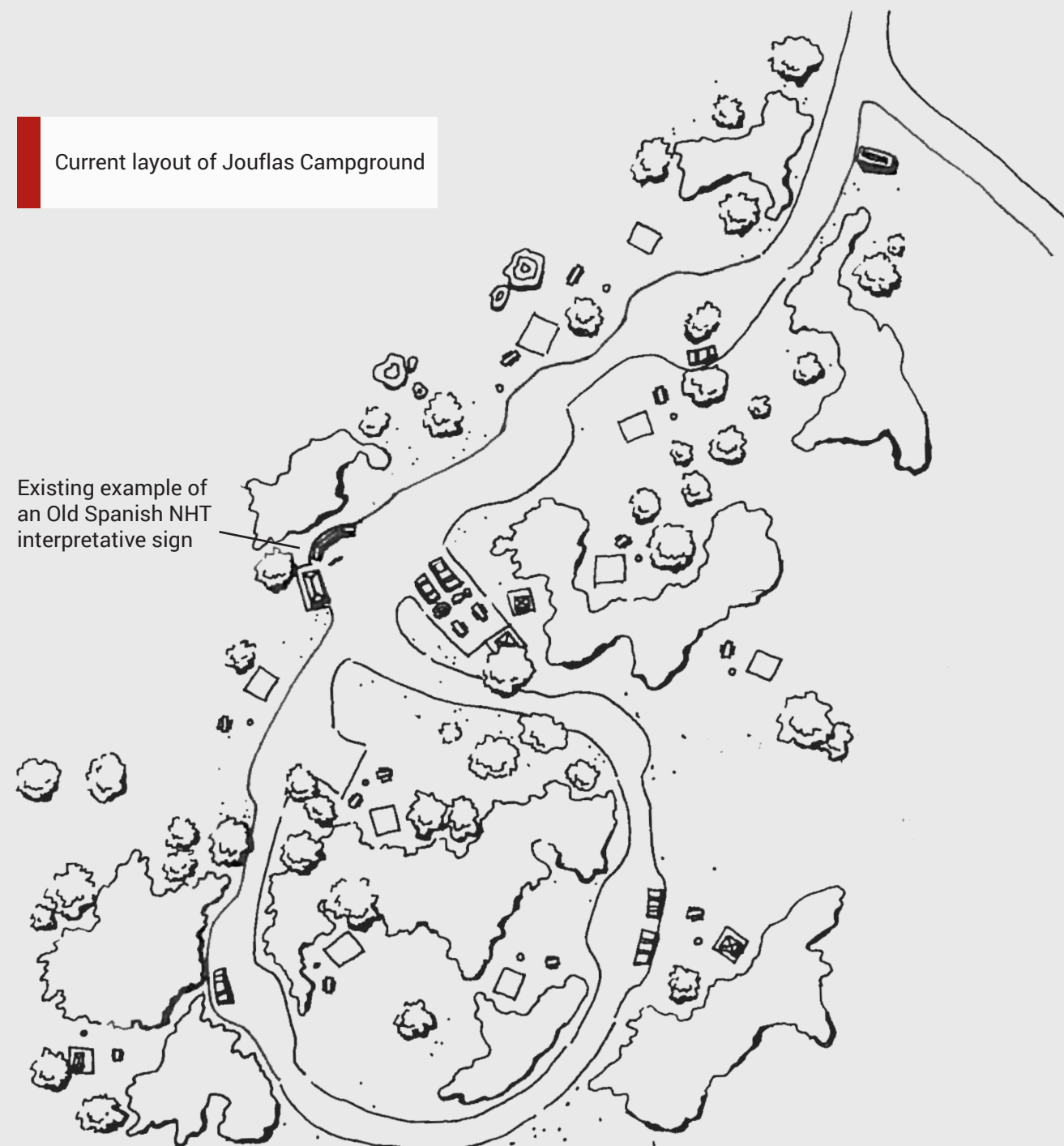


Joufflas Campground and Site Sign

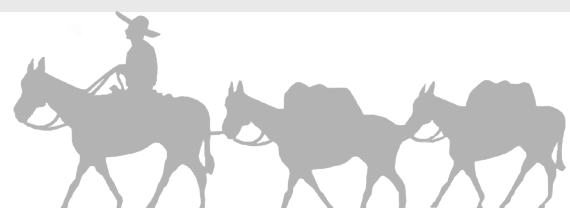


Joufflas Campground Site restrooms and interpretive media panels

Current layout of Joufflas Campground



Existing example of an Old Spanish NHT interpretative sign



## Mesa County- North Branch of the Old Spanish NHT

### Map A - Rabbit Valley Proposed Trail Elements

2

#### Castle Rock

**Development Opportunities:**

The US. Army Col. Loring Expedition was one of the many parties that used the Old Spanish NHT as they traversed west across the United States. Castle Rock was a landmark used by the travelers going through Rabbit Valley.

**Suggested Actions for Implementation:**

- Choose appropriate interpretive media
- Determine if need is orientation or interpretation
- Consult an interpretive media specialist or contractor



View of Castle Rock from the Kokopelli Trail



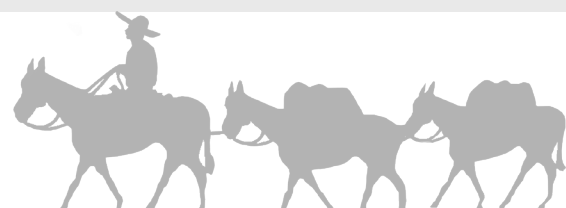
Conceptual example of an Old Spanish NHT interpretive kiosk and overlook



This sketch from the US. Army Col. Loring Expedition shows the significance of Castle Rock as a landmark along the Old Spanish NHT.

Incorporating this with other interpretive media could provide a clear visual into the history of these travelers.

The opportunity to develop an overlook or trail to view Castle Rock allows visitors to see the resemblance with the historical drawing.





## Mesa County- North Branch of the Old Spanish NHT

### Map A - Rabbit Valley Trail Elements

3

#### Knowles Overlook

**Development Opportunities:**

The Knowles Overlook Campground sits above the Colorado River and the Black Ridge Canyon Wilderness, with seven undeveloped campsites, and a small unmarked trail to the cliffs edge. This opportunity for Old Spanish NHT low profile signage would inform users of the importance of the Colorado River for various groups following the Old Spanish NHT.

**Suggested Actions for Implementation:**

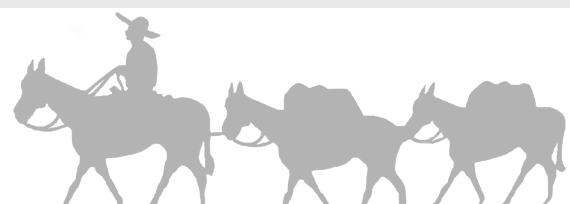
- Choose appropriate interpretive media
- Determine if the need is orientation or interpretive
- Consult an interpretive media specialist or contractor.



Knowles Overlook of the Colorado River



Conceptual example of an Old Spanish NHT low profile signage at the trail to the Knowle's Overlok



## Mesa County- North Branch of the Old Spanish NHT

### Map A - Rabbit Valley Proposed Trail Elements



#### Rabbits Ear Trail Head

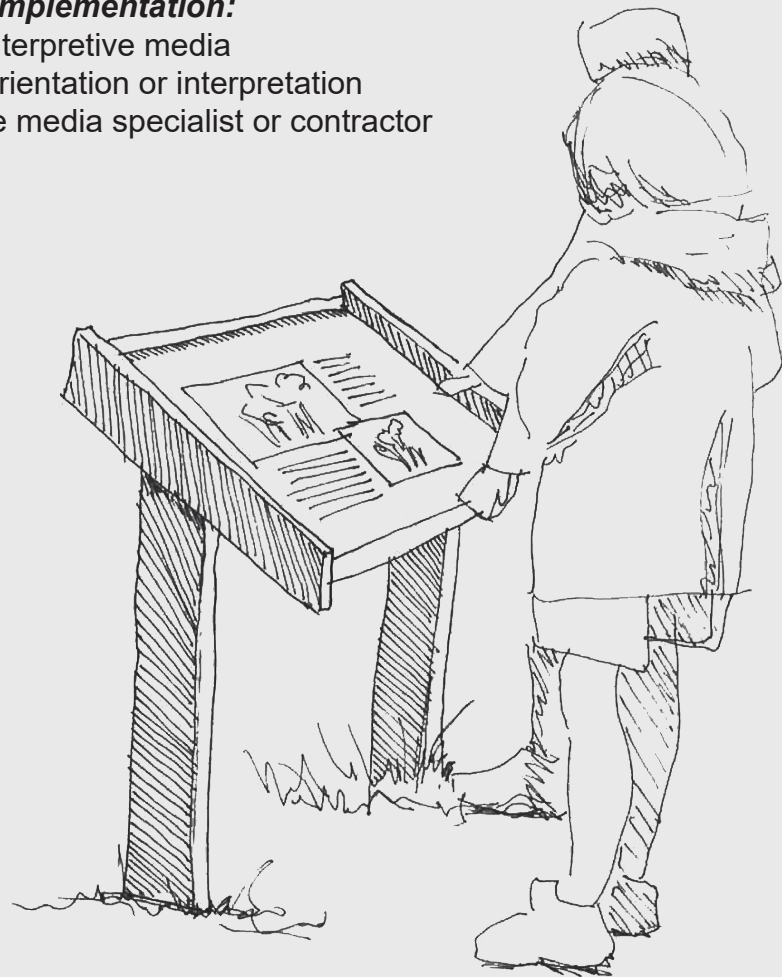


**Development Opportunities:**

Rabbit's Ear Trail leads visitors to a vista of the Colorado River, the Grand Mesa, and the LaSal Mountains in Utah. This trail provides an opportunity for users to see the various landscapes that travelers of the Old Spanish NHT encountered, while participating in active recreation. Additional interpretation at the trail head would give users a background on the Old Spanish NHT before using the trail, and in effect, the ability to picture the rough terrain traveled by people before them.

**Suggested Actions for Implementation:**

- Choose appropriate interpretive media
- Determine if need is orientation or interpretation
- Consult an interpretive media specialist or contractor



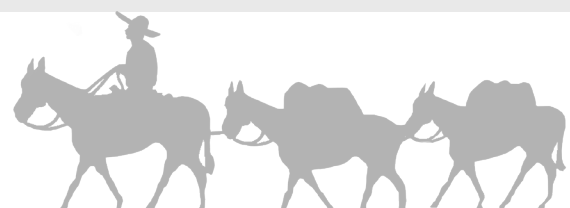
Wayside sign



Rabbits Ear Trail Head site sign




Rabbits Ear Trail Head information kiosk and log book




## Mesa County- North Branch of the Old Spanish NHT

### Map A - Rabbit Valley Additional Points of Interest

**5** **McDonald Creek Trail** 

**Development Opportunities:**  
McDonald Creek is a four mile out and back trail within the McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area. Users follow McDonald Creek to the Colorado River, passing a variety of unique rock art from the Fremont Native Americans. The trailhead is on the suggested recreation route following the Kokopelli trail, where there is also a clear view of Castle Rock.

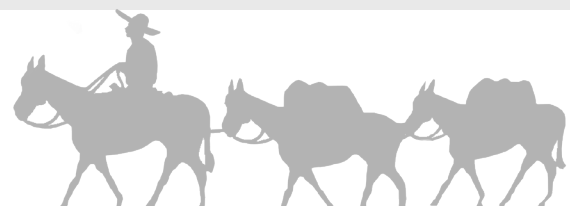
**6** **Joufflas Horse Trail** 

**Development Opportunities:**  
Joufflas Horse Trail is a popular trail, connecting to the McDonald Creek Trail after the first five miles. It's proximity to both Joufflas Campground and Castle Rock makes it a notable destination for users of the McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area. Both the Joufflas and McDonald Creek Trail either start at or loop back to the Old Spanish NHT, but do not follow the actual trail.



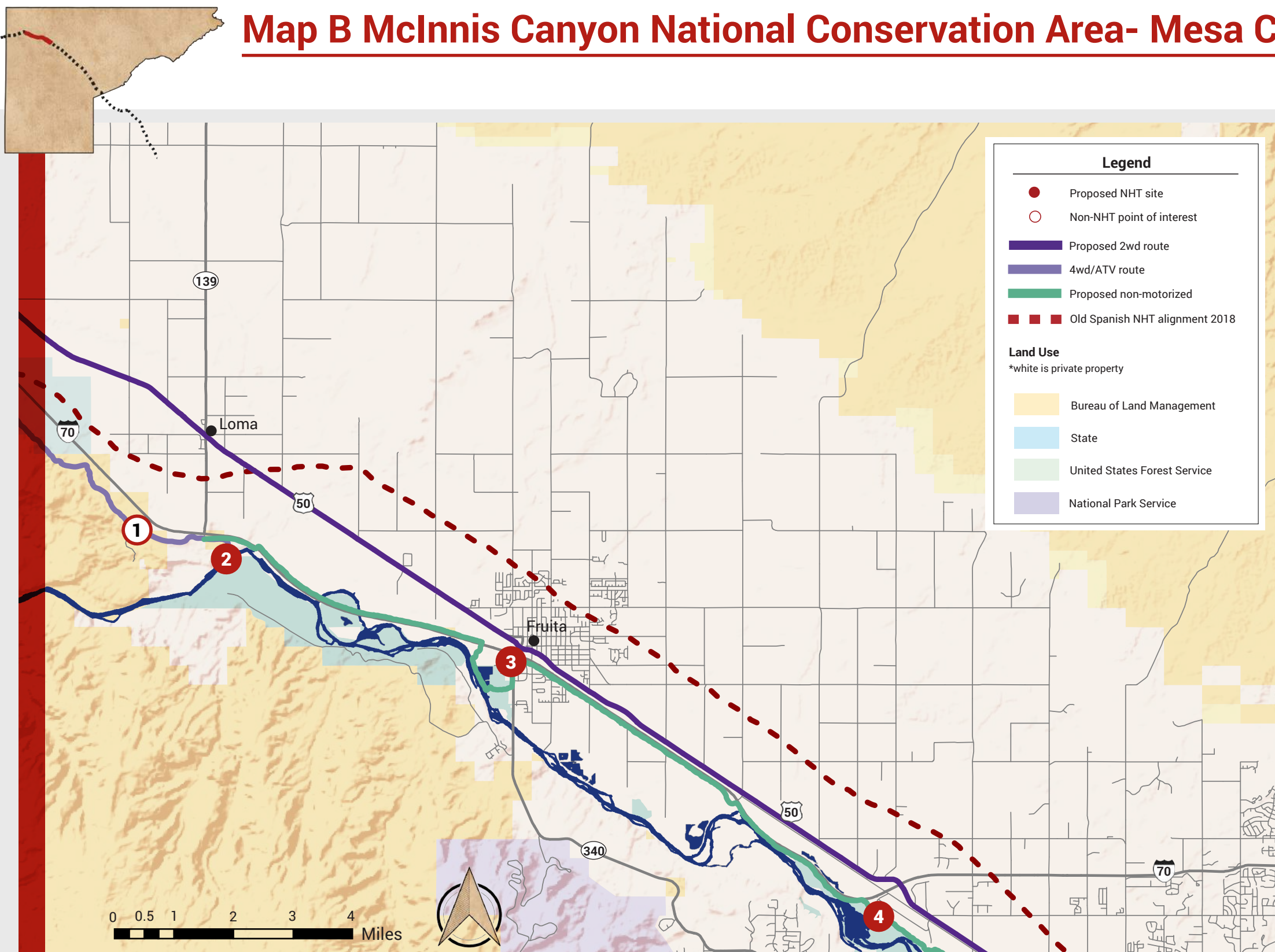
View of Castle Rock from the McDonald Creek Trailhead

Joufflas Horse Trail entry gate





# Map B McInnis Canyon National Conservation Area- Mesa County



## Existing Trail Elements:

None

## Proposed Trail Elements:

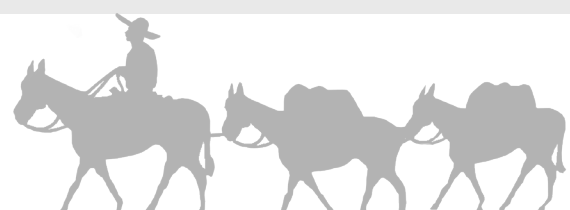
- 2 Loma Boat Ramp
- 3 Fruita Colorado Visitor Center
- 4 Walter Walker Wildlife

## Other Points of Interest Along the Trail:

(Non-Old Spanish NHT related)

- 1 Kokopelli Bike Trailhead

See pp. for detailed trail element descriptions



## Mesa County- North Branch of the Old Spanish NHT

### Map B - McInnis Canyon National Conservation Area Proposed Trail Elements



#### Kokopelli Bike Trail

**Development Opportunities:**

The Kokopelli's Trail runs parallel and in some parts the same location as the historic route of the Old Spanish NHT. This popular mountain biking destination has a variety of clearly marked trail loops for various skill levels located within the McInnis Canyon National Conservation Area. This is an excellent opportunity to inform visitors at the trail head of the history involving the Old Spanish NHT, marking Hawkeye Road, connecting the various parking lots and trailheads, and mark portions of the trail network.

**Suggested Actions for Implementation:**

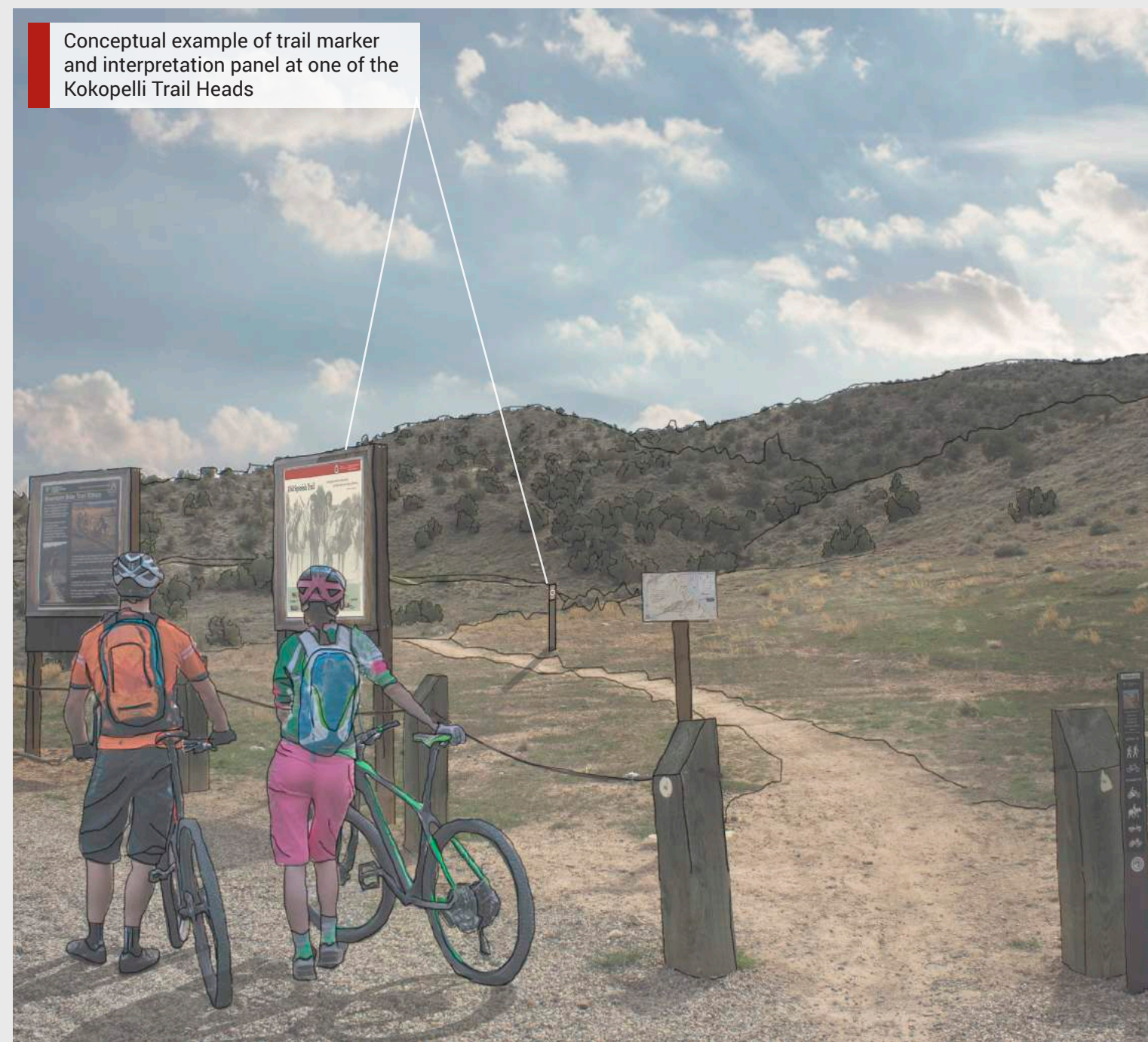
- Develop a pedestrian sign plan to mark the trail as historic route or Old Spanish NHT (See sign example to the right).
- Order and install pedestrian and 4WD signage
- Plan for and fabricate 1 wayside exhibit to be placed at the existing parking lot and trailhead



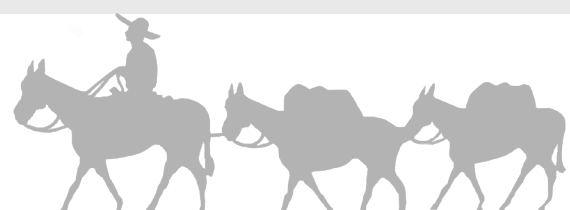
The main parking area and Trailhead for the Kokopelli's Trail network



Old Spanish NHT fiberglass posts stickers and posts - typically used in rural areas along segments of trail



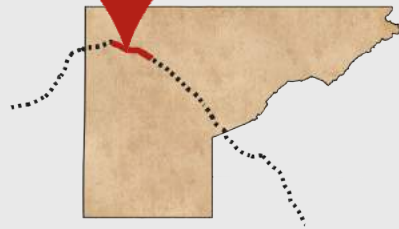
Conceptual example of trail marker and interpretation panel at one of the Kokopelli Trail Heads



## Mesa County- North Branch of the Old Spanish NHT

### Map B - McInnis Canyon National Conservation Area Proposed Trail Elements

2



#### Loma Boat Ramp

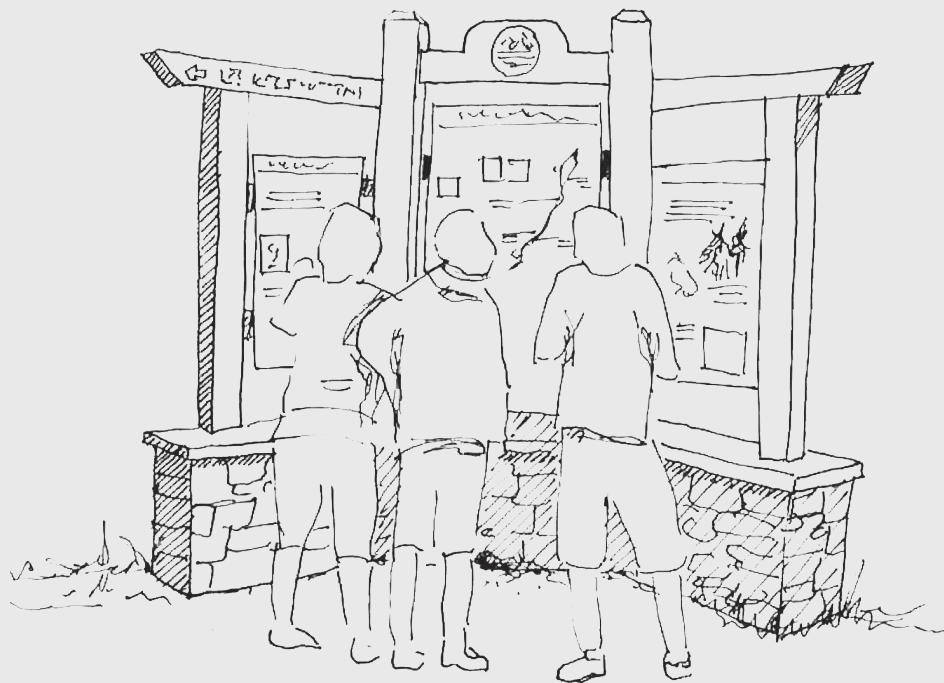


**Development Opportunities:**

The Loma Boat Ramp is a popular destination for residents and visitors of the surrounding communities. It's proximity to the Colorado River is an opportunity to implement Old Spanish NHT interpretive signage to inform users of the importance of the Colorado River to the Old Spanish NHT expeditions and later users of the trail trace.

**Suggested Actions for Implementation:**

- Choose appropriate interpretive media
- Determine if need is orientation or interpretation
- Consult an interpretive media specialist or contractor

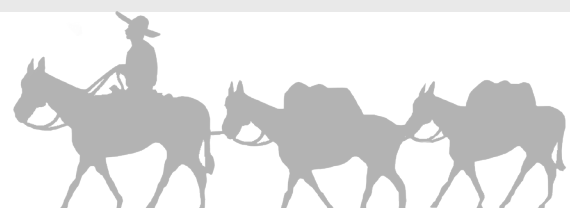


Interpretive sign



Opportunity for implementation of an Old Spanish NHT interpretive sign

Conceptual example of the Loma Boat Ramp with an Old Spanish NHT interpretive sign



## Mesa County- North Branch of the Old Spanish NHT

### Map B - McInnis Canyon National Conservation Area Proposed Trail Elements



#### Fruita Colorado Visitor Center



**Development Opportunities:**

The town of Fruita, CO was established in 1884. The establishment of the Colorado National Monument in 1937 gradually began drawing more people to the small community of Fruita. Today, along with the appeal of the scenic public lands, Fruita is a popular mountain biking destination. The Fruita Visitor Center is located right off the Old Spanish NHT and is a great location informing visitors to the town of Fruita and the history of the Old Spanish

NHT. The Colorado River Front trail also connects to the Visitor Center and could be signed and marked as a site for the Old Spanish NHT.

**Suggested Actions for Implementation:**

- Consider making the Visitor Center a certified site on the Old Spanish NHT



Fruita, CO, Visitor Center



#### Walter Walker Wildlife

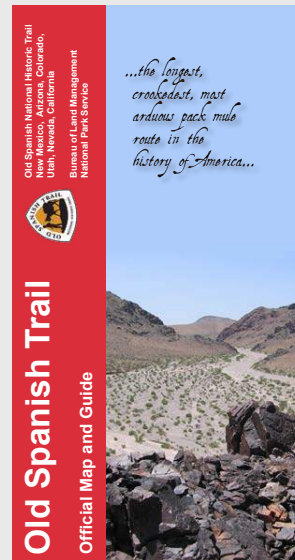


**Development Opportunities:**

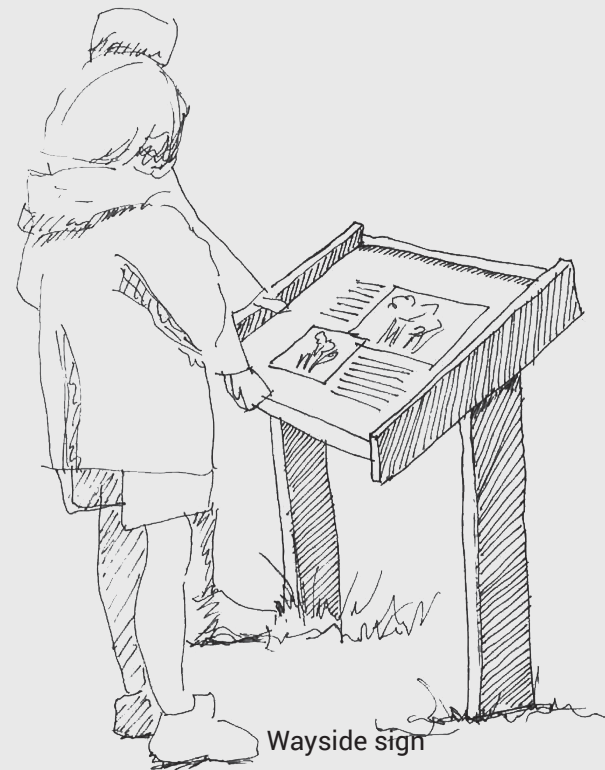
The Walter Walker Wildlife Area site sits on the Colorado River just west of Grand Junction, CO. It covers 489 acres of land with various paths and access to the popular River Front Trail which leads up to Fruita and down through Grand Junction. Low profile signage for the Old Spanish NHT could allow users to learn about the historical context of the area.

**Suggested Actions for Implementation:**

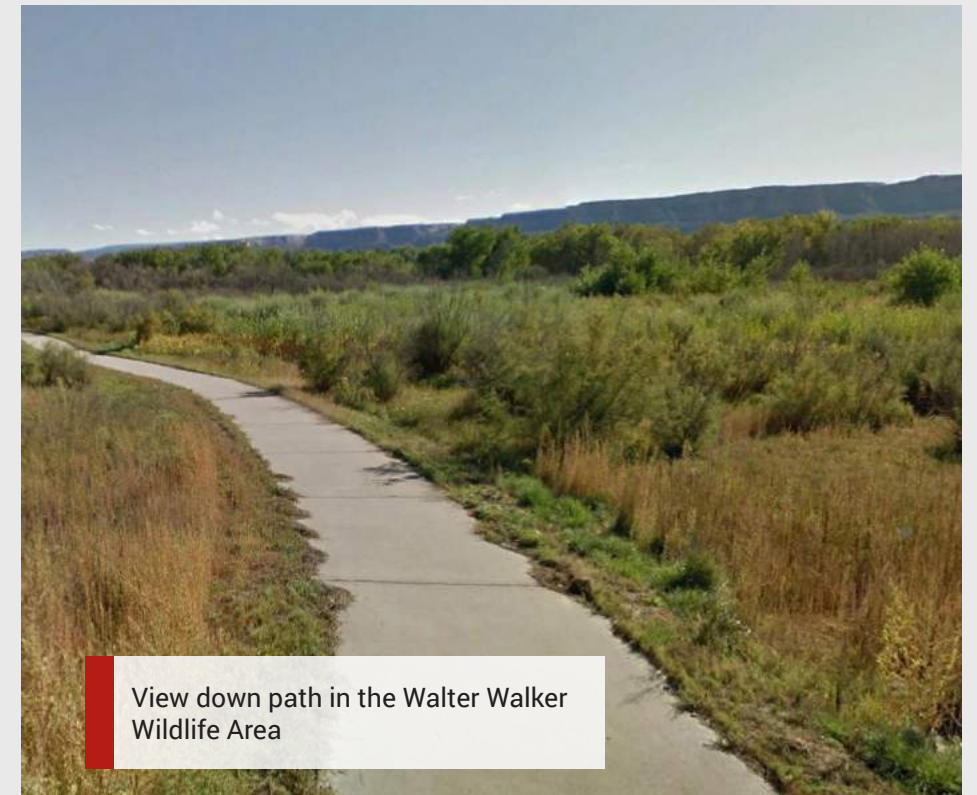
- Choose appropriate interpretive media
- Determine if need is orientation or interpretive
- Consult and interpretive media specialist or contractor



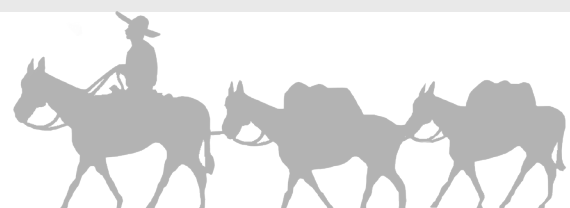
Above: Examples of Old Spanish NHT materials that could be provided to the information center



Wayside sign

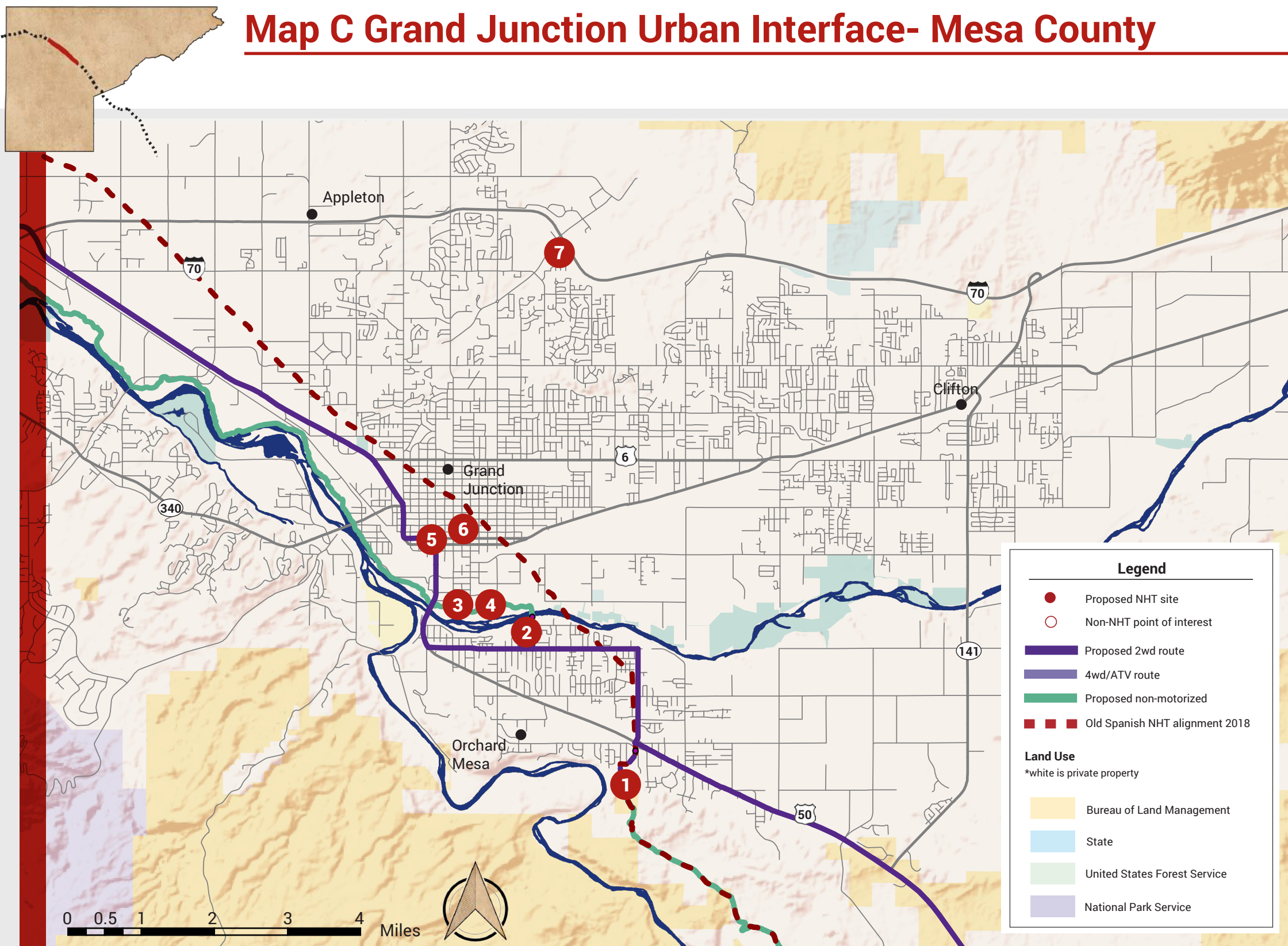


View down path in the Walter Walker Wildlife Area





# Map C Grand Junction Urban Interface- Mesa County



## Existing Trail Elements:

- 1 Orchard Mesa Trail and Trailhead

## Proposed Trail Elements:

- 2 River Crossing / Eagle Rim Park
- 3 Colorado River Front Trail
- 4 Las Colonias
- 5 Museum of Western Colorado
- 6 Main Street Exhibit
- 7 Grand Junction Visitor Center

## Other Points of Interest Along the Trail:

(Non-Old Spanish NHT related)

None

See pp. for detailed trail element descriptions

**Legend**

- Proposed NHT site
- Non-NHT point of interest
- Proposed 2wd route
- 4wd/ATV route
- Proposed non-motorized
- Old Spanish NHT alignment 2018

**Land Use**  
\*white is private property

- Bureau of Land Management
- State
- United States Forest Service
- National Park Service



## Mesa County- North Branch of the Old Spanish NHT

### Map C - Grand Junction Urban Interface Proposed Trail Elements

**1**



#### Orchard Mesa Trail and Trailhead

**Development Opportunities:**  
The Orchard Mesa Trailhead is clearly marked from Highway 50 to direct users to the highly trafficked parking area. This leads visitors to the 7 mile out-and-back trail, which connects to the Whitewater Trailhead. Recently there was interpretative signage for the Old Spanish NHT added to the Orchard Mesa Trailhead, which displays inaccurate information. Correcting this information would benefit users to know the history of the Old Spanish NHT.

**Suggested Actions for Implementation:**

- Choose appropriate interpretive media
- Determine if need is orientation or interpretation
- Consult an interpretive media specialist or contractor




Old Spanish Trail Orchard Mesa Trailhead sign from the road



Orchard Mesa Trailhead parking area and signage in need of update

**2**



#### River Crossing / Eagle Rim Park

**Development Opportunities:**  
Eagle Rim Park sits above the the Colorado River, connecting to the Colorado River Trail. It has open space, picnic tables, a playground, and skate facility. This location is significant to the crossing of the Colorado River by the Old Spanish NHT expeditions. As a popular recreation destination, Eagle Rim Park would be an excellent opportunity to bring attention to the relevance of the Old Spanish NHT through kiosks, signs, or sidewalk tiles. This is also the location non-motorized, pedestrian crossing for the Old Spanish NHT.

**Suggested Actions for Implementation:**

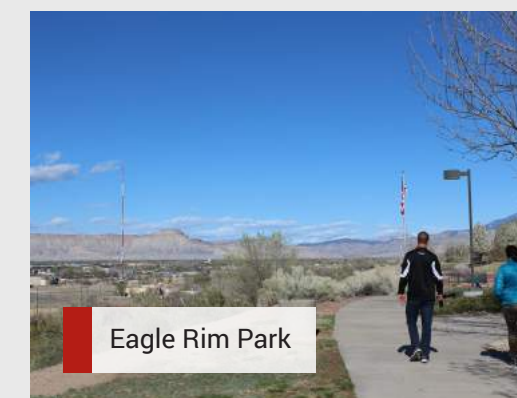
- Choose appropriate interpretive media
- Determine if need is orientation or interpretation
- Consult an interpretive media specialist or contractor



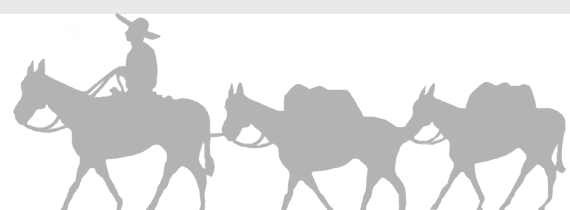
Various examples of signage opportunities for the River Crossing site and Eagle Rim Park, which can be used to either inform or simply mark the significance to the Old Spanish NHT



Bridge crossing the Colorado River to Eagle Rim Park



Eagle Rim Park



## Mesa County- North Branch of the Old Spanish NHT

### Map C - Grand Junction Urban Interface Proposed Trail Elements



#### Colorado River Front Trail



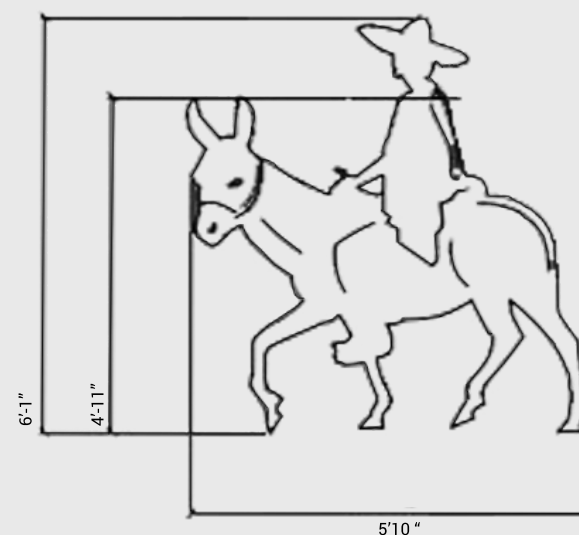
**Development Opportunities:**

The Colorado River Front Trail currently follows the river for about 22 miles through the cities of Fruita, Grand Junction, and Palisade. There are plans for trail extensions in either direction, expanding the use of this popular recreational node. Due to the accessibility and proximity of this path to the

Old Spanish NHT, it would be a beneficial asset to the implementation of Old Spanish NHT signage. This could be an opportunity for trail tiles, designed to inform users of the historical context of the trail without obstructing the surrounding scenery. Silhouettes are also a viable option, sparking visitor's imagination.

**Suggested Actions for Implementation:**

- Choose appropriate interpretive media
- Determine if need is orientation or interpretation
- Consult an interpretive media specialist or contractor



The Old Spanish NHT silhouettes are a commonly used method to display the connection between an area and the travelers once present.

The repeated use of these silhouettes creates distinguishable essence associated with the Old Spanish NHT, that users can recognize throughout the states it passes through.

A location as scenic and diversly used as the Colorado River Front Trail would be a unique opportunity to install silhouettes, creating a sense of place in history for users.

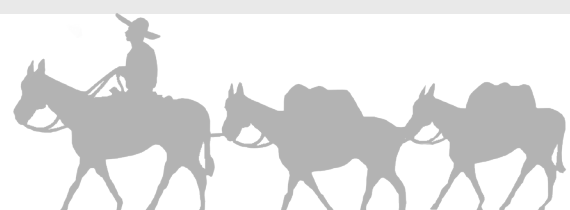
Sidewalk tiles are another feature that can create a low profile method of marking the Old Spanish NHT.



Conceptual example of trail marker sidewalk tile and interpretation panel along the Colorado River Front Trail



Conceptual example of trail marker sidewalk tile and mule silhouettes along the Colorado River Front Trail



## Mesa County- North Branch of the Old Spanish NHT

### Map C - Grand Junction Urban Interface Proposed Trail Elements



#### Los Colonias Park



**Development Opportunities:**

While the amphitheater has been constructed and is already used for many events and concerts, other plans for Las Colonias Park such as gardens and a native arboretum, festival grounds, a disc golf course, and multiple business parks are yet to be implemented. Interpretive signs and displays of the Old

Spanish NHT in this area would potentially be well used by the increasing numbers of visitors to the park.

**Suggested Actions for Implementation:**

- Choose appropriate interpretive media
- Determine if the need is orientation or interpretive
- Consult an interpretive media specialist or contractor.



Current view of the Ampitheater in Las Colonias Park



#### Museum of Western Colorado

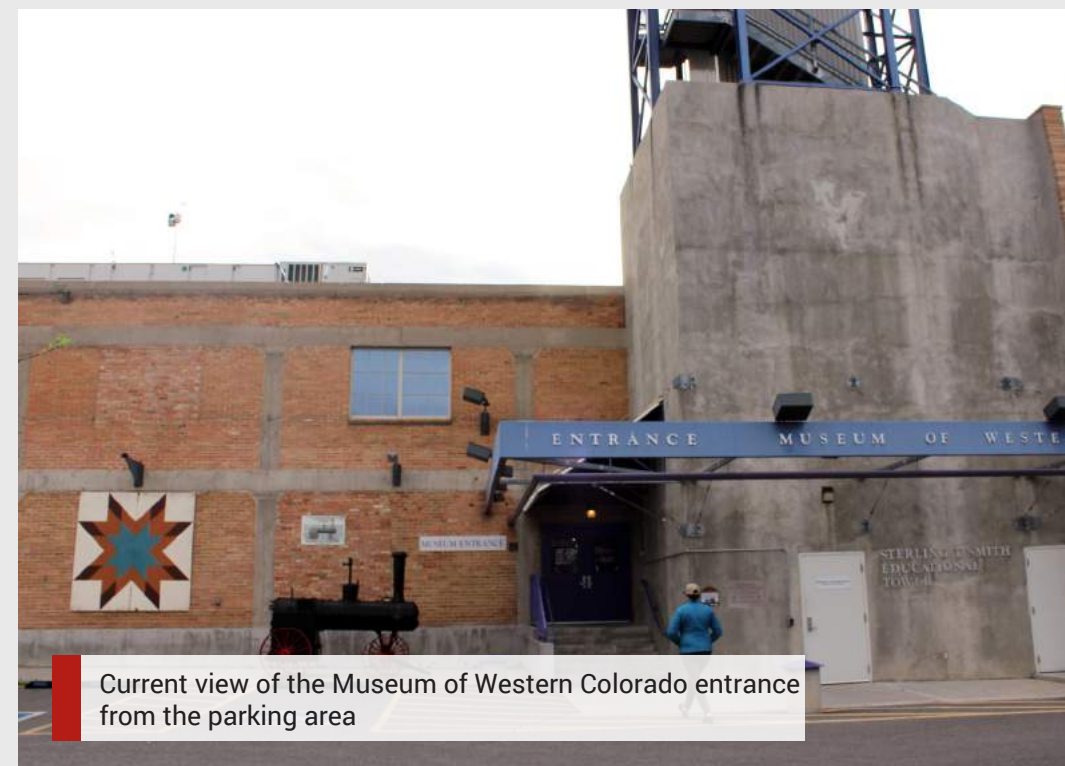


**Development Opportunities:**

Located in Grand Junction, CO, the Museum of the West offers a variety of exhibits showcasing regional history. Visitors can experience the area's past as they "ride" in a stagecoach, "fly" a 1958 Cessna, gaze upon ancient Anasazi and Fremont art and pottery, sit in a one-room schoolhouse, and visit a pastime saloon. Also featured at the museum is a 'Spanish Exploration and Distant Treasures in the Mist' Gallery that tells the story of the Spanish explorers who journeyed into what is now western CO. This could be expanded to elaborate on the Old Spanish NHT and it's connection to current day western CO.

**Suggested Actions for Implementation:**

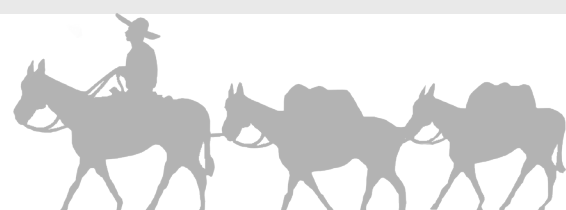
- Choose appropriate interpretive media
- Determine if the need is orientation or interpretation
- Consult an interpretive media specialist or contractor



Current view of the Museum of Western Colorado entrance from the parking area



Current view of the Museum of Western Colorado from the street



## Sevier County- North Branch of the Old Spanish NHT

### Map B - I-70 West Proposed Trail Elements



#### Grand Junction Main Street Exhibit



**Development Opportunities:**

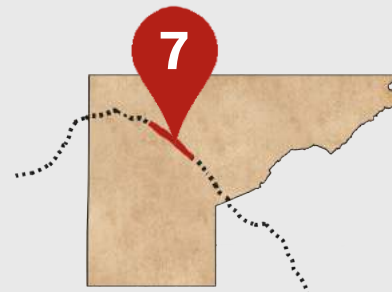
Main Street in Grand Junction has a unique and beautiful display of various statues. A statue depicting traders from the Old Spanish Trail could create additional appeal to the area.

**Suggested Actions for Implementation:**

- Choose appropriate statue design
- Determine appropriate location
- Consult a contractor/sculptor



Place Holder



#### Grand Junction Visitor Center

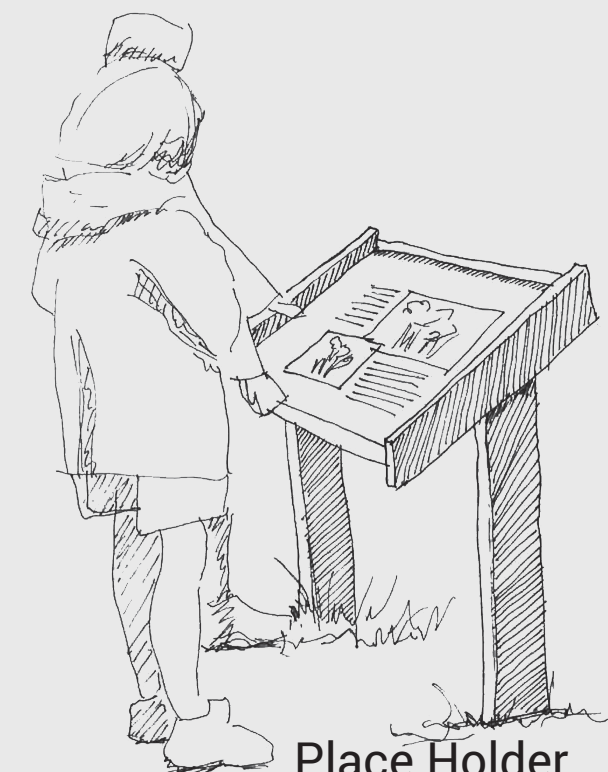


**Development Opportunities:**

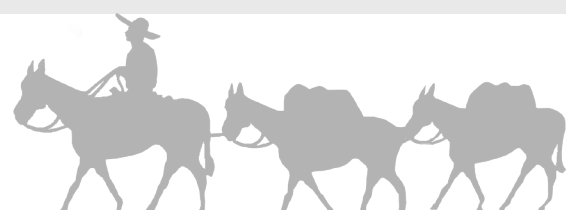
Enhancing the presence of the Old Spanish NHT within Grand Junction, CO, could bring the history of this community alive to both residents and visitors. The Grand Junction Visitor Center could be an excellent outlet for providing ample information on the Old Spanish NHT through interpretative pamphlets or the installation of an Old Spanish NHT information kiosk. Providing information on the Old Spanish NHT trail before users go into the landscape allows visitors to imagine Mesa County in a whole different light.

**Suggested Actions for Implementation:**

- Choose appropriate interpretive media
- Determine if the need is orientation or interpretive
- Consult an interpretive media specialist or contractor.

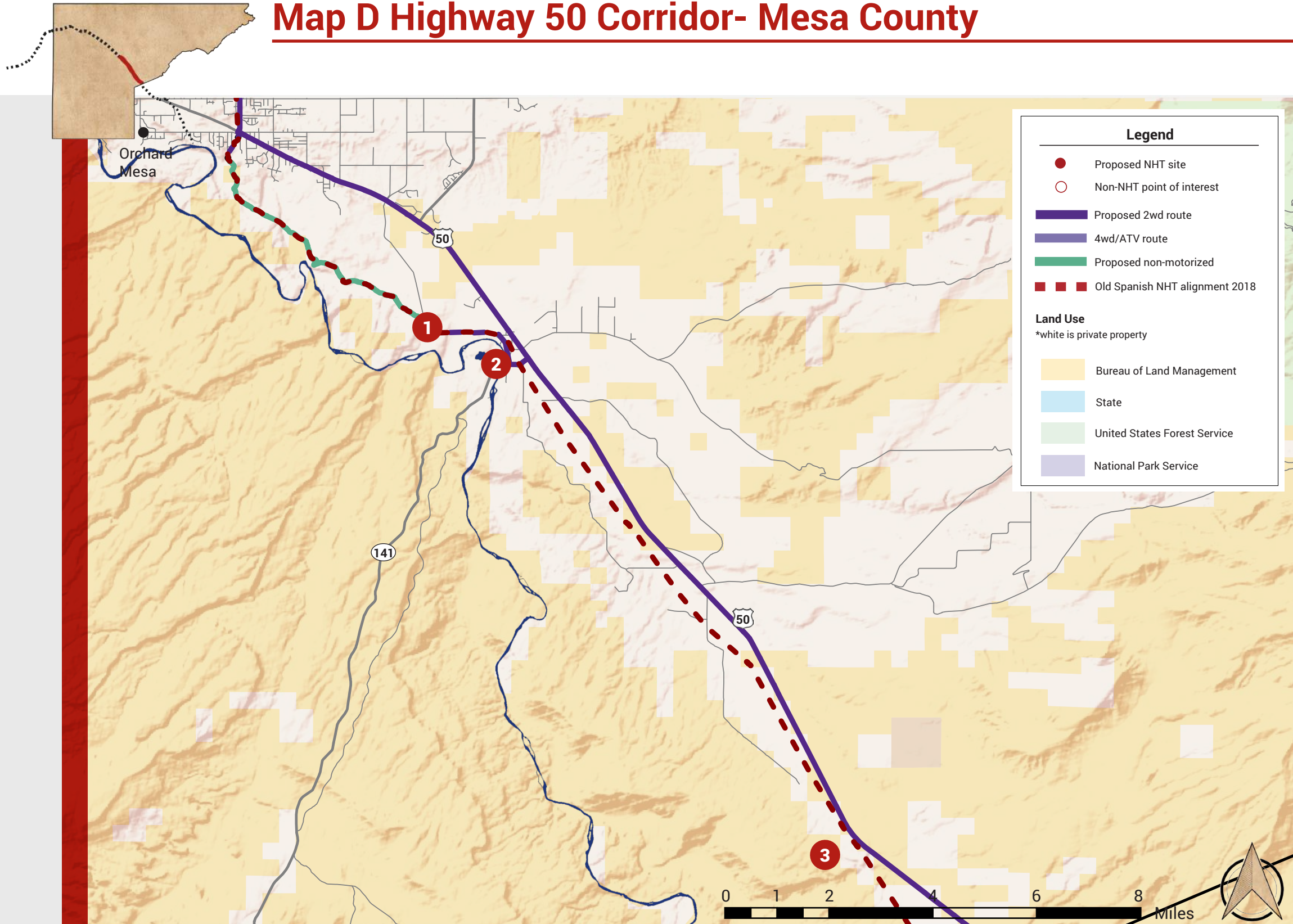


Place Holder





## Map D Highway 50 Corridor- Mesa County



### Existing Trail Elements:

- 1 Whitewater Trail and Trailhead

### Proposed Trail Elements:

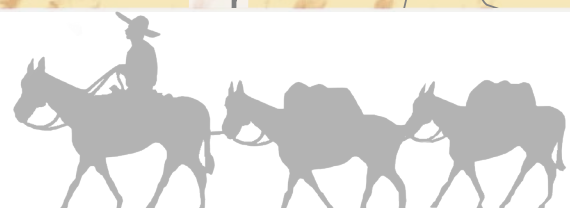
- 2 Highway 141 Gunnison River Boat Ramp
- 3 Hunting Grounds

### Other Points of Interest Along the Trail:

(Non-Old Spanish NHT related)

None

See pp. for detailed trail element descriptions



## Mesa County- North Branch of the Old Spanish NHT

### Map D - Highway 50 Corridor Proposed Trail Elements

#### 1 Whitewater Trail and Trailhead

**Development Opportunities:**  
The Whitewater trailhead connects directly to the Orchard Mesa trailhead. They are in fact both entrances to the same trail. This trail directly follows the nationally designated route for the Old Spanish NHT. The interpretive information at the trailhead could be improved and increased.

**Suggested Actions for Implementation:**

- Choose appropriate interpretive media
- Determine if the need is orientation or interpretation
- Consult an interpretive media specialist or contractor

#### 2 Highway 141 Gunnison River Boat Ramp

**Development Opportunities:**  
*\*\*Need more information about the significance of this site to the Old Spanish NHT.*

**Suggested Actions for Implementation:**

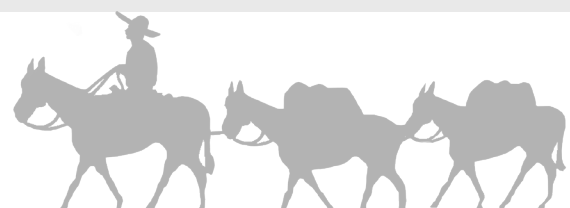
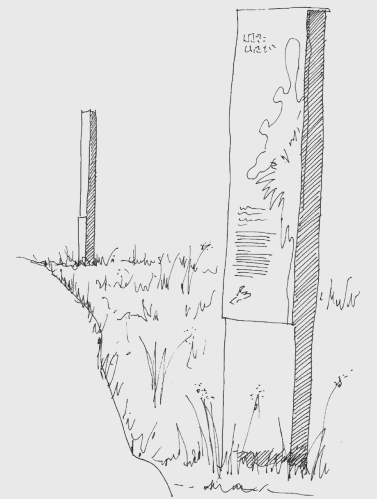
- Choose appropriate interpretive media
- Determine if the need is orientation or interpretive
- Consult an interpretive media specialist or contractor.



Whitewater trailhead and signage for the Old Spanish NHT



Gunnison River Boat Ramp



## Mesa County- North Branch of the Old Spanish NHT

### Map D - Highway 50 Corridor Proposed Trail Elements



#### Hunting Grounds

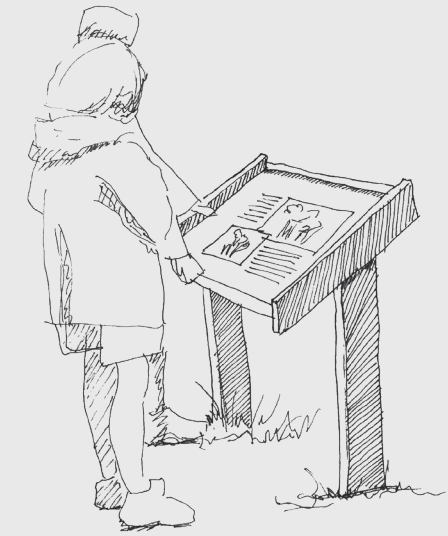
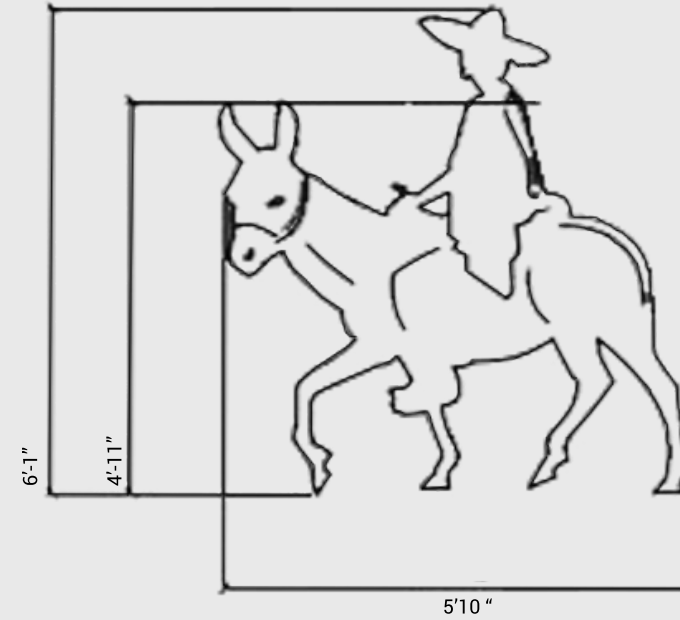


#### Development Opportunities:

*\*\*Need more information about the significance of this site to the Old Spanish NHT.*

#### Suggested Actions for Implementation:

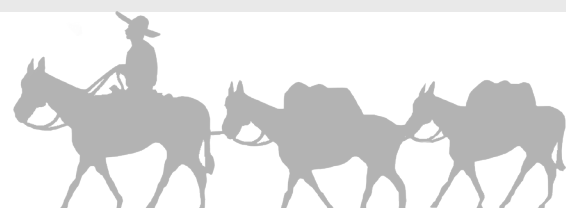
- Choose appropriate interpretive media
- Determine if the need is orientation or interpretive
- Consult an interpretive media specialist or contractor.



Hunting Grounds along Highway 50



Hunting Grounds along Highway 50



# Delta County

## *Trail Segment Details*

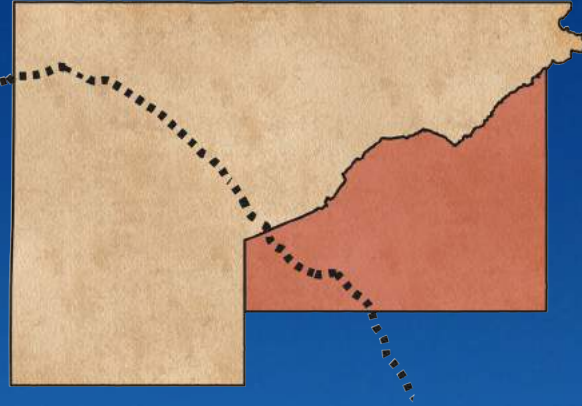
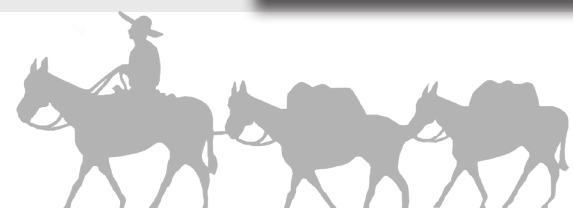
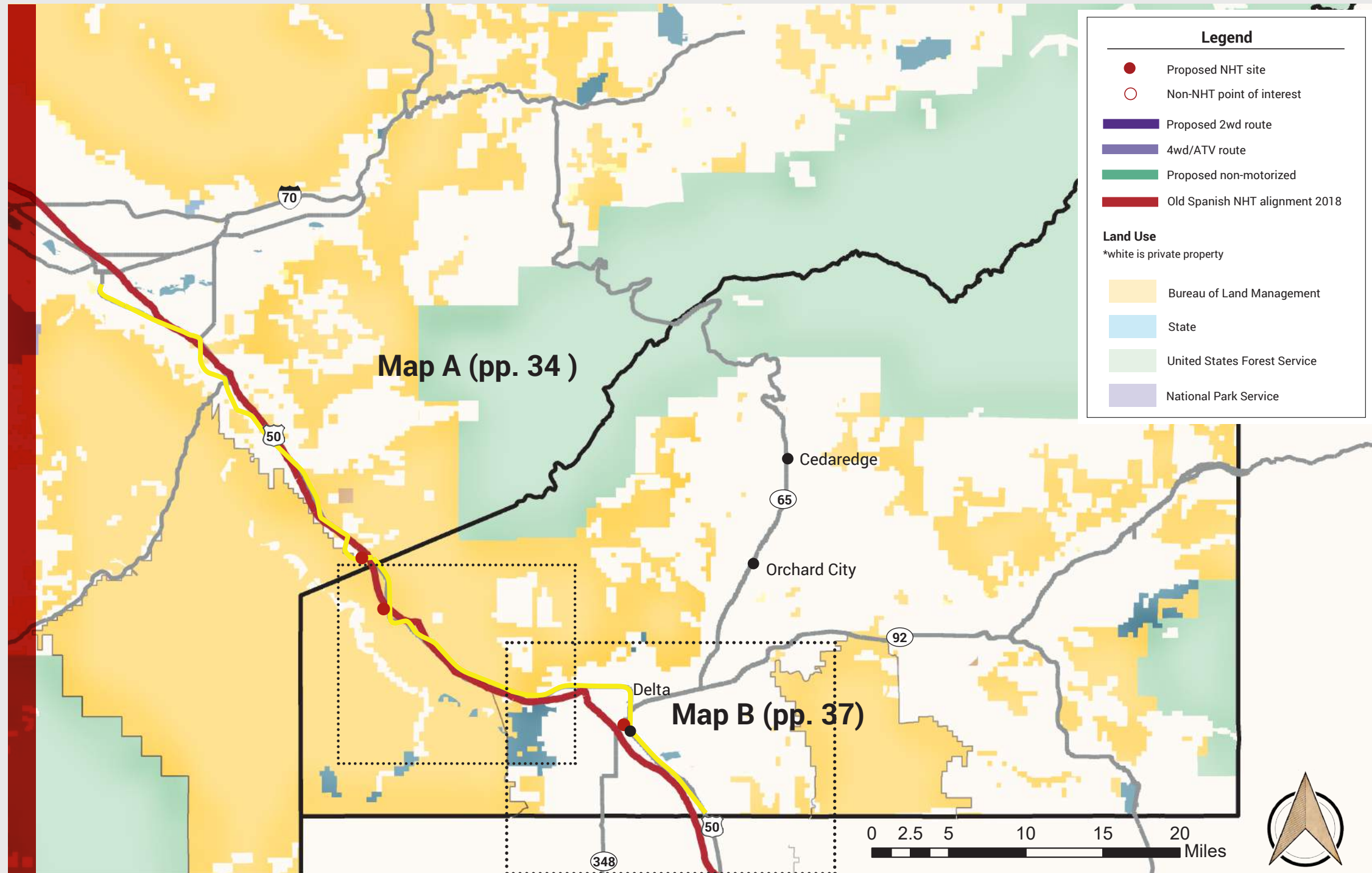
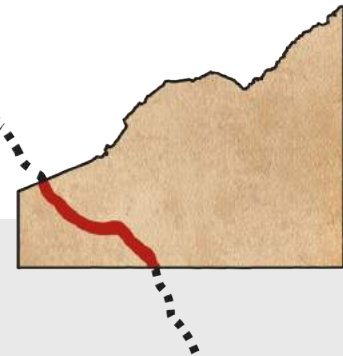


Photo: Escalante State Wildlife Area



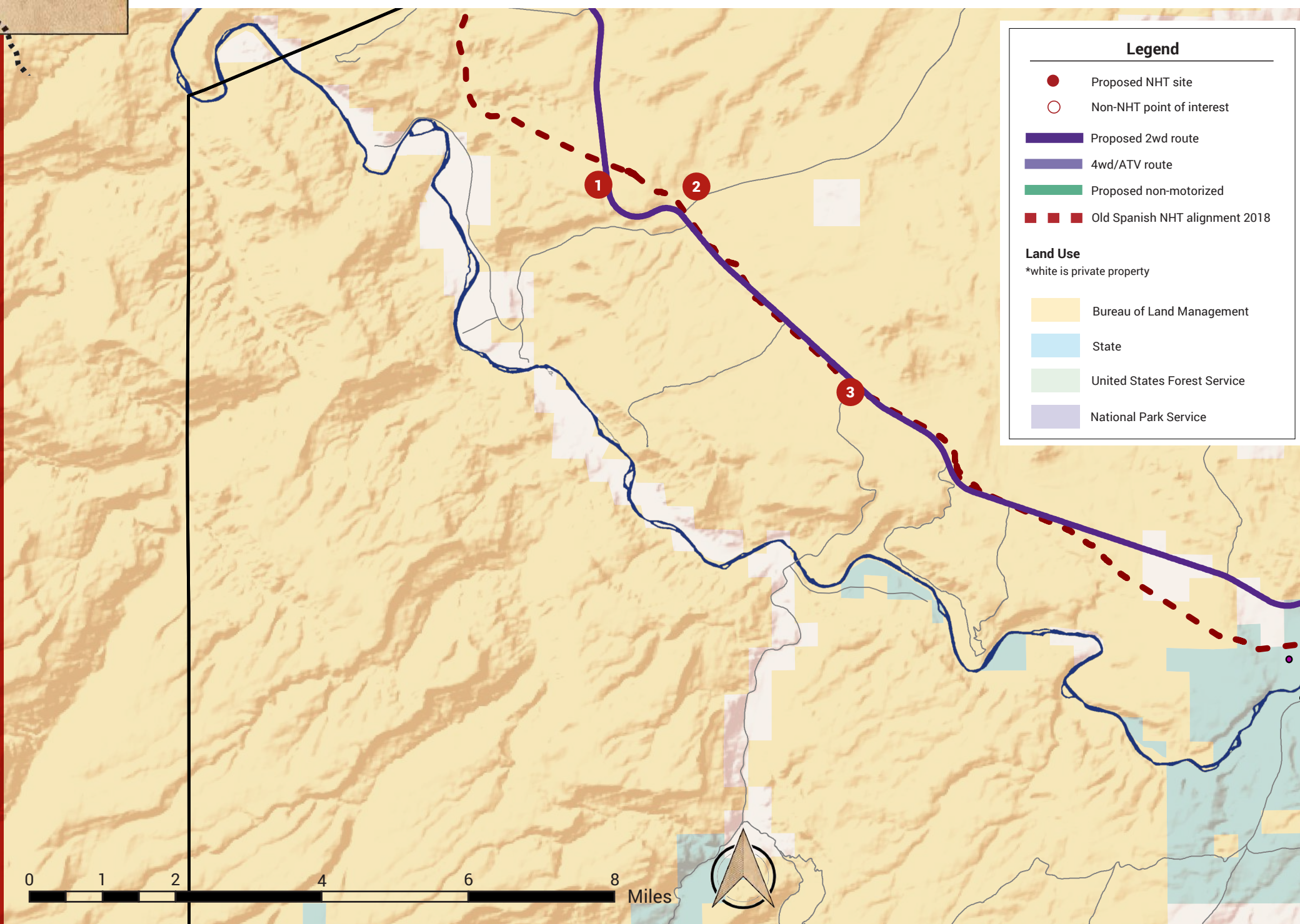


# Overview Map of Delta County





# Map A Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area- Delta County



**Legend**

- Proposed NHT site
- Non-NHT point of interest
- Proposed 2wd route
- 4wd/ATV route
- Proposed non-motorized
- Old Spanish NHT alignment 2018

**Land Use**  
\*white is private property

- Bureau of Land Management
- State
- United States Forest Service
- National Park Service

## Existing Trail Elements:

None

## Proposed Trail Elements:

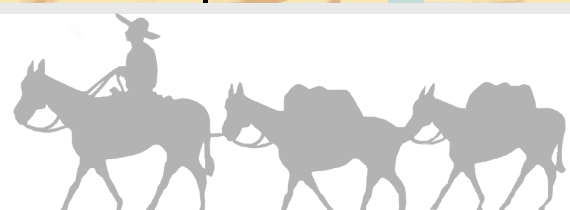
- 1 Fool's Hill-Christmas Tree Site
- 2 Well's Gulch
- 3 Escalante Parking Area

## Other Points of Interest Along the Trail:

(Non-Old Spanish NHT related)

None

See p. for detailed trail element descriptions



## Delta County- North Branch of the Old Spanish NHT

### Map A- Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area



#### 1 Fool's Hill- Christmas Tree Site



**Development Opportunities:**

Fool's Hill was a landmark that did not invoke many feelings of joy for traders on the Old Spanish Trail. It was a very difficult climb for travelers, especially the heavy-laden wagons. Original trail trace can be seen across the highway. This site is popular among locals, who enjoy decorating a 'christmas tree' and have

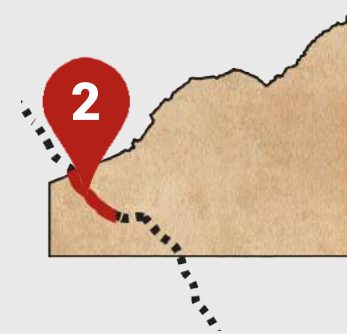
erected an American flag nearby. An interpretive panel could be implemented in the area to point out the trail trace and explain other facts about the site.

**Suggested Actions for Implementation:**

- Choose appropriate interpretive media
- Determine if the need is orientation or interpretation
- Consult an interpretive media specialist or contractor



Fool's Hill / Christmas Tree Site along Highway 50



#### 2 Well's Gulch



**Development Opportunities:**

Well's Gulch was the first spring of water that traders would have reached on the Old Spanish NHT heading west after passing the Gunnison River. It is located along Highway 50, thus a gravel pull out could easily be placed along the road and a very simple interpretive sign for people passing by to be able to

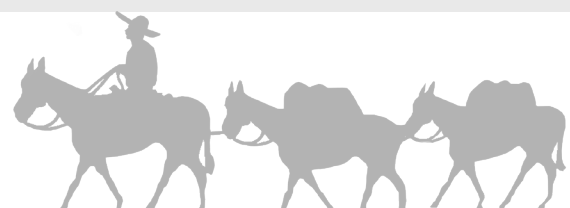
briefly stop and learn more about the trail.

**Suggested Actions for Implementation:**

- Choose appropriate interpretive media
- Determine if the need is orientation or interpretation
- Consult an interpretive media specialist or contractor



Concept of signage at Well's Gulch





## Delta County- North Branch of the Old Spanish NHT

### Map A- Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area



#### Escalante Parking Area

**Development Opportunities:**

Along highway 50, there is access to the Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area. It comprises 210,172 acres of protected public lands. The Old Spanish NHT runs through a portion of these protected lands. The parking area could be used as an interpretive site for the Old Spanish NHT.

**Suggested Actions for Implementation:**

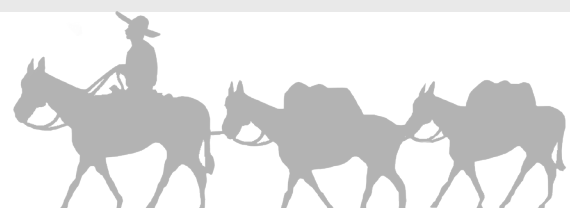
- Choose appropriate interpretive media
- Determine if the need is orientation or interpretation
- Consult an interpretive media specialist or contractor



Parking area for Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area

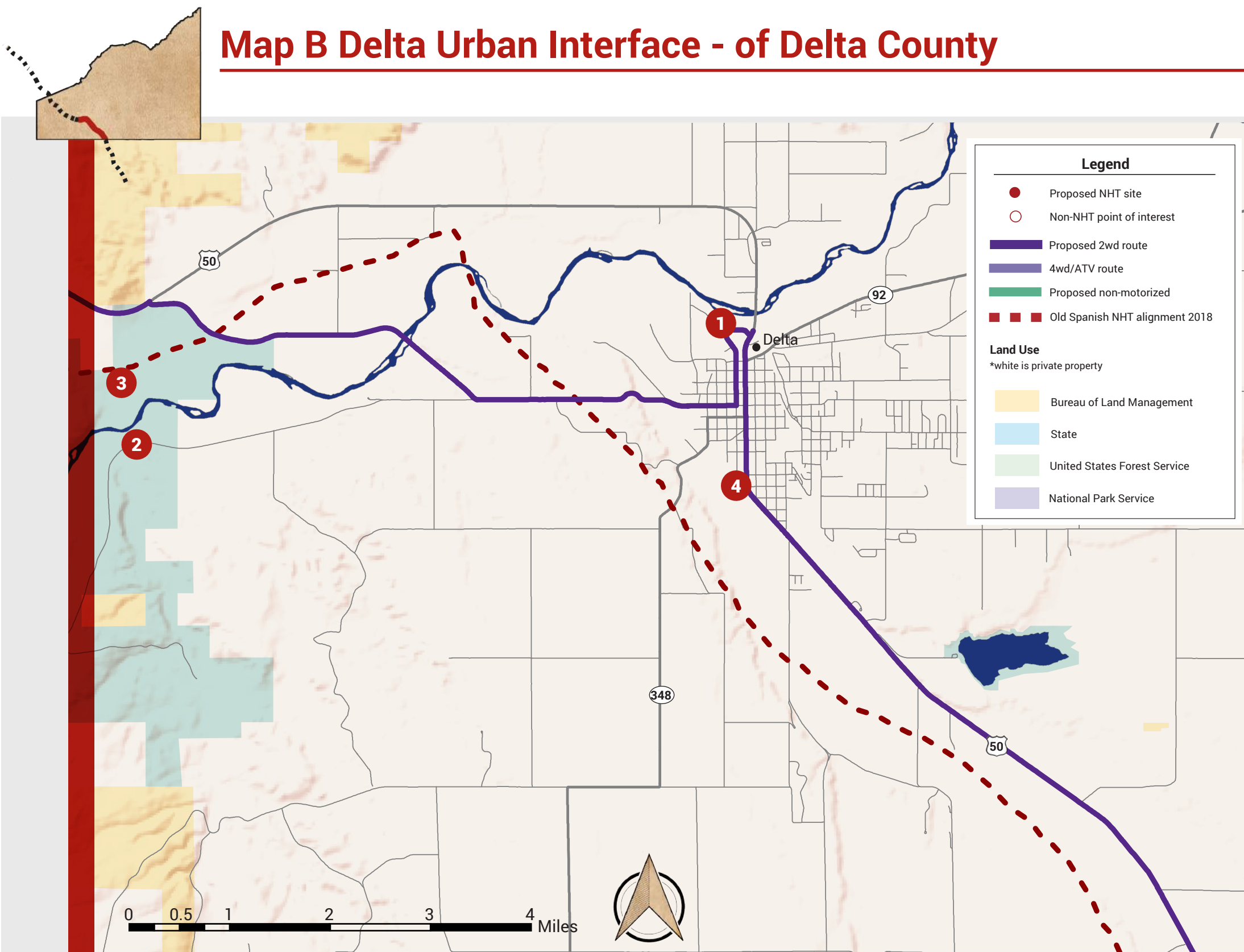


View of trail leaving parking area for Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area





## Map B Delta Urban Interface - of Delta County



### Existing Trail Elements:

- 1 Fort Uncompahgre History Museum

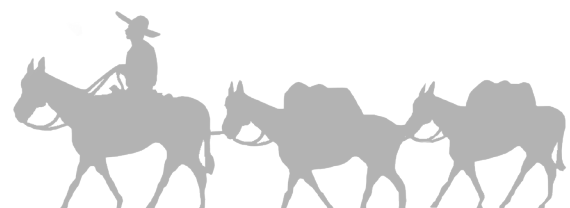
### Proposed Trail Elements:

- 2 Escalante Wildlife Area Overlook
- 3 Gunnison River Overlook
- 4 Dominguez-Escalante Mural

### Other Points of Interest Along the Trail:


(Non-Old Spanish NHT related)  
None

See p. for detailed trail element descriptions



## Delta County- North Branch of the Old Spanish NHT

### Map B- Delta/Montrose Urban Interface Proposed Trail Elements



#### Gunnison River Crossing Overlook and Trail

**Development Opportunities:**  
The Gunnison River Overlook provides a great opportunity for low profile signage explaining the importance of the Gunnison River for traders following the Old Spanish NHT. There is also existing trail trace, which would create a unique experience for visitors to walk along the actual trail.

**Suggested Actions for Implementation:**

- Choose appropriate interpretive media
- Determine if the need is orientation or interpretation
- Consult an interpretive media specialist or contractor

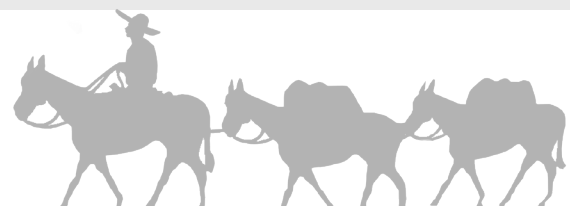



#### Escalante Wildlife Area Overlook

**Development Opportunities:**  
This was the actual site of the historic Fort Uncompahgre. Signage could show visitors where the Fort sat and recount the events that transpired during the period that it was in operation.

**Suggested Actions for Implementation:**

- Choose appropriate interpretive media
- Determine if the need is orientation or interpretation
- Consult an interpretive media specialist or contractor



## Delta County- North Branch of the Old Spanish NHT

### Map B- Delta/Montrose Urban Interface Proposed Trail Elements



**3**

#### Fort Uncompahgre History Museum

**Development Opportunities:**

Antoine Roubidoux, an influential trader out of Santa Fe, established Fort Uncompahgre as a trading outpost in 1828. The location was a central hub for many trade and travel routes in the west, primarily the North Branch of the Old Spanish NHT. Although very successful, the trading post was attacked by Ute Indians in 1843, leaving it completely

devastated. Currently, visitors can explore the replicas of Fort Uncompahgre at this existing trail element and learn more about the specifics of the Old Spanish NHT.

**Suggested Actions for Implementation:**

- Develop a sign plan to mark the historic route of the Old Spanish NHT and interpret the Old Spanish NHT
- Order and install signs




Inside a cabin at Fort Uncompahgre



Inside a trading cabin at Fort Uncompahgre



View of the entrance to Fort Uncompahgre



**4**

#### Dominguez-Escalante Mural

**Development Opportunities:**

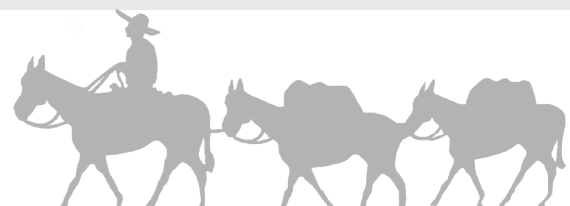
Delta is known for its stunning murals portraying images of the past. Below is an example of the Dominguez-Escalante Mural in Delta. Either nearby or in another location, Delta could add to its collection of murals by creating a mural depicting travelers on the Old Spanish Trail.

**Suggested Actions for Implementation:**

- Choose appropriate mural design
- Determine appropriate location
- Consult with an artist or other contractor



Dominguez-Escalante mural along Highway 50



# Appendix

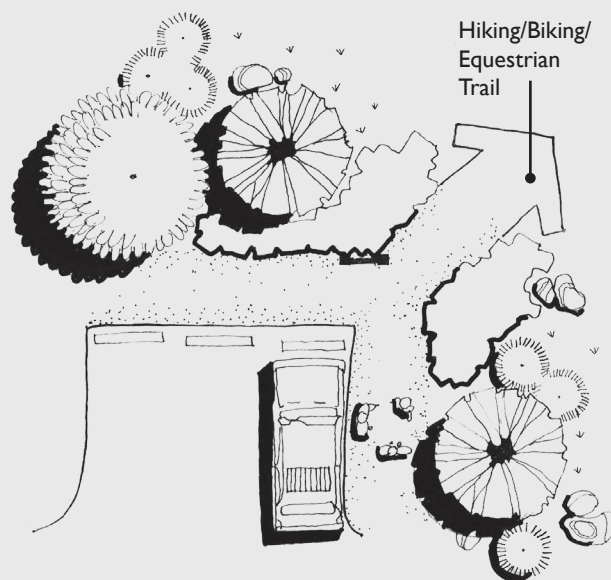


Photo: View from Kokopelli Trail from the State line

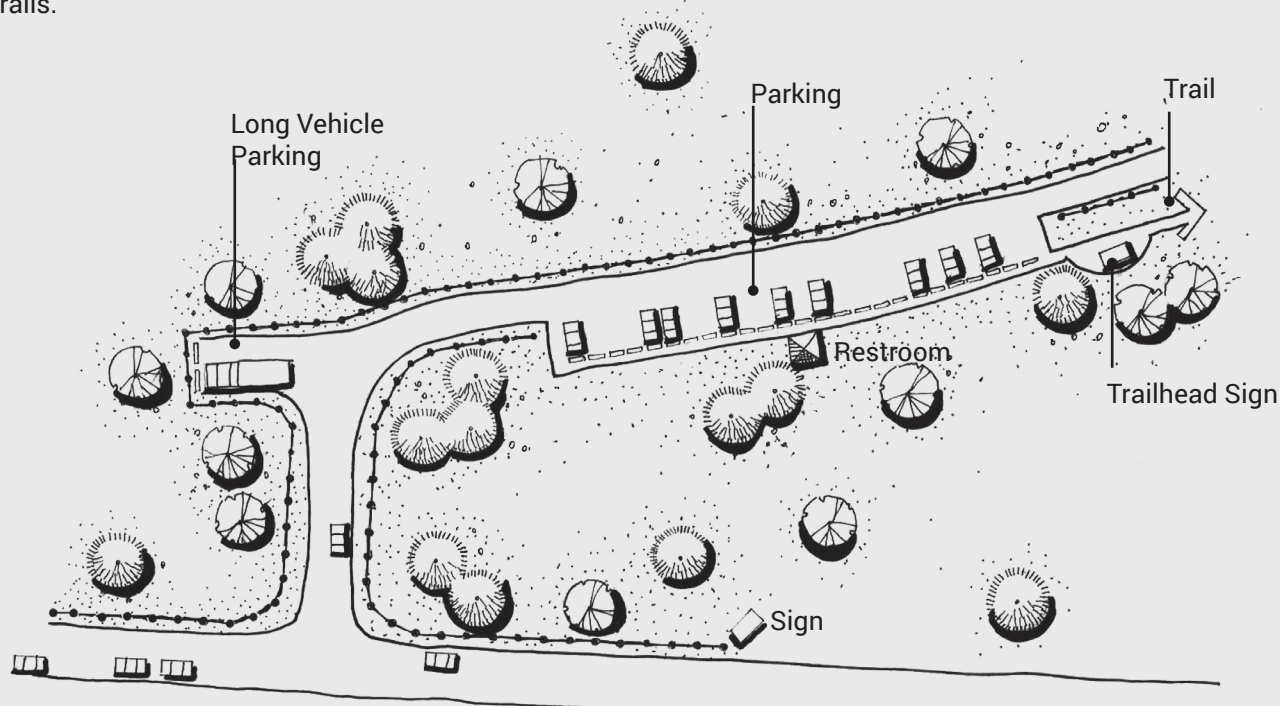


# Typical Trail Elements and Alternatives

## Trailheads



Simple Trailhead concept appropriate for non-motorized trails.

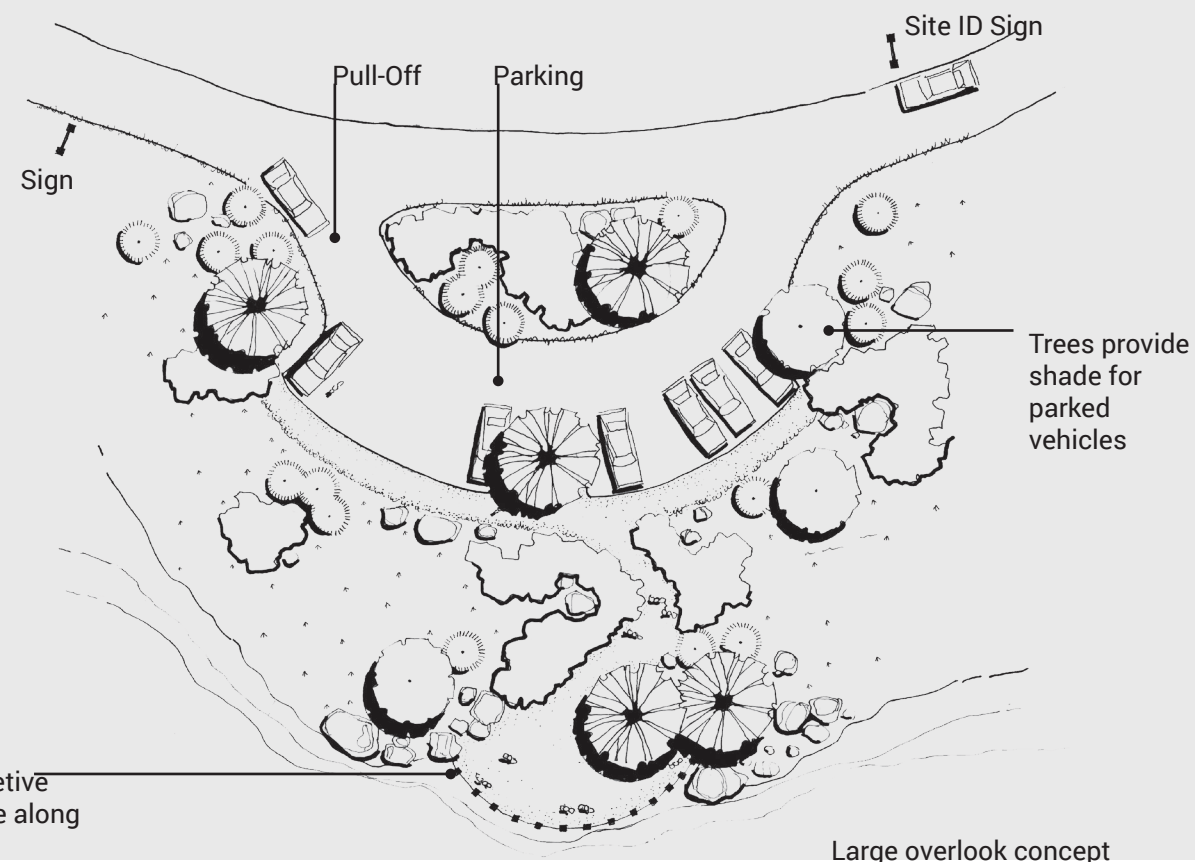


Multi-Use Trailhead concept appropriate for Off Highway Vehicles, Hiking, Biking, Equestrian, etc. trails

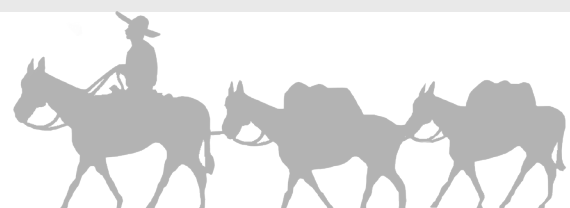
## Waysides and Overlooks

Waysides and overlooks are areas along the trail where information and interpretation about the trail is provided. These spaces provide an opportunity to share the Old Spanish NHT's unique history with the public in the setting where the events took place. This will connect people to the experience of the Old Spanish NHT's original travelers.

Waysides/overlooks should be placed at locations that are easy to access from the main route of travel. They can be as simple as a parking spot and a sign, or they may be a day-use area that includes other elements such as restrooms, picnic tables, shade structures, etc.



Large overlook concept



# Typical Trail Elements and Alternatives

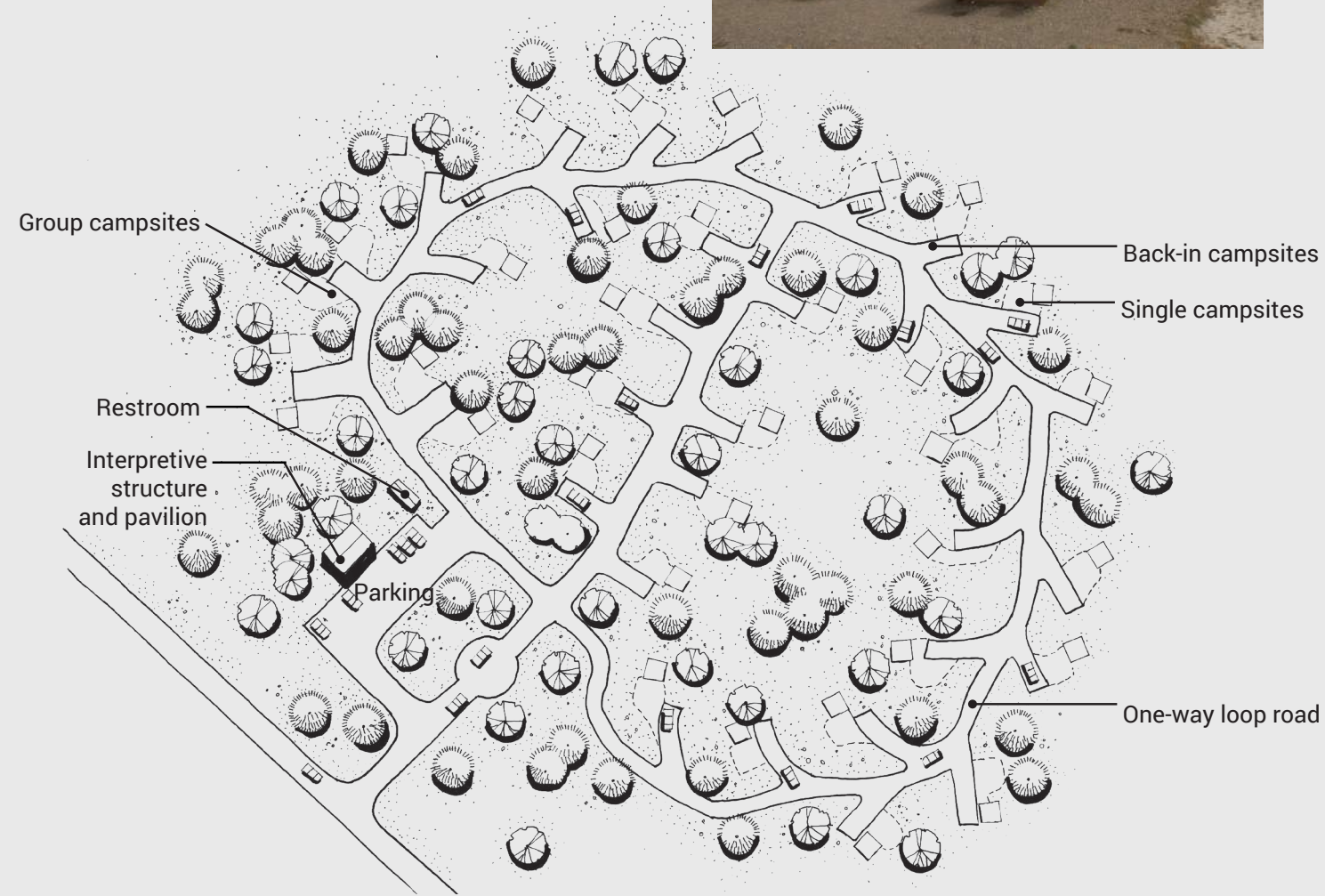
## Campgrounds and Day-Use Areas

Campgrounds provide the opportunity to stay at a location overnight. They may be very simple—a designated area without amenities, or more established—with benches, fire-pits, tent pads, water, restrooms, picnic tables, etc.

There are several locations along the Old Spanish NHT in the Mesa and Delta counties where campgrounds could be established. These would be connected to the recreational route of the trail.



Camping site at Joufflas Campground



Campground and Day-Use area concept plan

## Kiosks and Interpretive Structures

Interpretive media provides the opportunity to educate people about the Old Spanish NHT's history and the landscape through which it passes.

The Old Spanish NHT has a unique history that creates many opportunities to bring the trail to life through interpretation and kiosks. Kiosks may be placed anywhere along the trail individually, or as features of trailheads, waysides, overlooks and campgrounds.



Wayside sign example at Fremont Indian State Park and Museum



# Typical Trail Elements and Alternatives

## Visitor Centers and Museums



Fruita Visitor Center

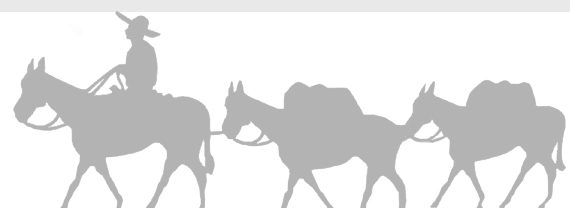


Old Spanish Trail Museum Concept Perspective

Visitor Centers and Museums along the Old Spanish National Historic Trail in Grand County give travelers access to historic collections and detailed trail information.



Above: Examples of Old Spanish NHT materials that could be provided to the information center





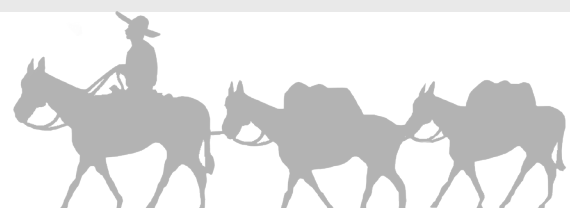
# Trail Chart

## Non-motorized Trails

Name	Location	Distance	Description	Difficulty
Salt Creek segment (Troy Built) of Kokopelli Mountain Bike Trail	West of Mack, Co, the trail starts at the Troy Built trailhead	3.6 miles one way	This is a single track portion of the Kokopelli trail that starts at the Troy Built trailhead and then heads west on the main portion of the Kokopelli Trail	Difficult
Colorado Riverfront Trail; Mack to Fruita	The trail starts at the Loma boat ramp turn off and ends at the Fruita visitor center	5.6 miles one way	This is a paved walking, biking, and running trail; newly built portion	Easy
Colorado Riverfront Trail; Fruita to Grand Junction, Eagle Crest Park	There are two trailheads, one at the Colorado Welcome Center in Fruita, and the other at Eagle Rim Park	14.4 miles one way	This is a paved walking, biking, and running trail	Easy
Orchard Mesa/Whitewater Trail	The trail can be accessed at the Orchard Mesa trailhead or the Whitewater trailhead	4.6 miles one way	This is a dirt trail primarily used for biking and hiking, that closely follows the Old Spanish NHT	Intermediate
Gunnison River Crossing Overlook Trail	The trail starts at the Gunnison River Overlook in Delta	0.5 miles round trip	This is a simple 'out and back' trail to see the Gunnison River	Easy

## Driving Route Routes

Name	Location	Distance	Description	Difficulty
Rabbit Valley segment of Kokopelli Trail 4WD/ATV Route	Trail starts off exit 2 on I-70 and heads south on Rabbit Valley Rd	5.3 miles to Utah border one way	Route runs south/east from I-70 to the Utah border	Intermediate
Hawkeye Road 4WD/ATV Route	Inbetween the Kokopelli Trail parking lot to the Troy Built Trail parking lot	5.2 miles one way	A dirt frontage road running between Loma and Mack I-70 exits	Easy
McInnis Canyon segment of Kokopelli Trail 4WD/ATV Route	Stretches from exit 2 on I-70 to just south/west of Mack	7.5 miles one way	A country road portion of the Kokopelli mountain biking trail	Intermediate
Mesa County Driving Route	Follows Route 50 from the Grand County line in Utah to the Delta County line	54.3 miles one way	This route follows the Old Spanish NHT through Mesa County	Easy
Delta County Driving Route	Follows Route 50 from the Mesa County line on to the Montrose County line	24.7 miles one way	This route follows the Old Spanish NHT through Delta County	Easy




# Old Spanish National Historic Trail

## Sign Families

### Road Signs

**Old Spanish National Historic Trail**  
Family of Road Signs

**Historic Route Sign 36" x 48":**  
*Marks the historic route of the national historic trail*



*Historic Route signs have the following lower panel options:*

NEXT  
XX MILES




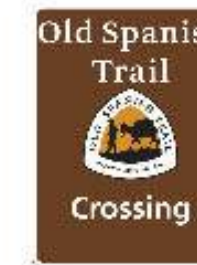
SEGMENT  
BEGINS

SEGMENT  
ENDS

←

→

↔

<p><b>To Historic Route 36" x 48":</b> <i>Directs people to the historic route of the national historic trail</i></p> 	<p><b>(Site Name Here) 36" x 48":</b> <i>Directs people to sites associated with the national historic trail</i></p> 	<p><b>Local Tour Route 36" x 48":</b> <i>Directs people along a defined route to multiple historic trail sites</i></p> 	<p><b>Crossing Sign 36" x 48":</b> <i>Marks where the historic route of the national historic trail crosses a road</i></p> 
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*All above signs come with lower panel arrow options:*


↑

←

→

↔

**Site ID Sign 72" x 42":**  
*Marks a site associated with the national historic trail*



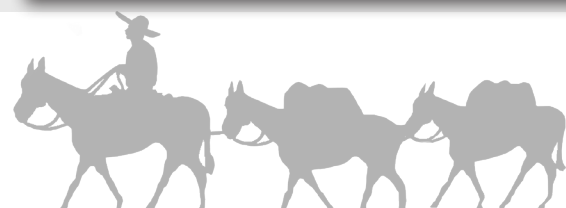
### Pictures of Installed Signs



OST signage at the Whitewater Trailhead



OST signage in New Mexico




# Old Spanish National Historic Trail

## Sign Families

### Pedestrian Signs

**Old Spanish National Historic Trail**  
Family of Pedestrian Signs

**Historic Route Sign 16" x 24":**  
*Marks the historic route of the national historic trail*



*Historic Route signs have the following lower panel options:*

← (Destination)  
(Destination Line 2)  
XXX miles

(Destination)  
(Destination Line 2)  
XXX miles →

*Left: shows distance to the beginning and end of the trail from the location the sign is placed*

SEGMENT  
BEGINS

SEGMENT  
ENDS

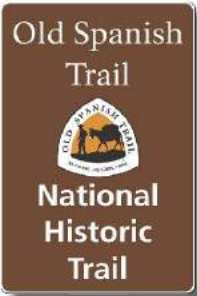
NEXT  
XX MILES

←


→

↔

**Trail Sign 16" x 24":**  
*Marks trail that is in close proximity and/or connects to the national historic trail, but is not on the actual historic route*



**(Site Name Here) 16" x 24":**  
*Directs people to historic sites associated with the national historic trail*



*Above signs come with lower panel arrow options:*


↑

←


→

↔

**Crossing Sign 16" x 24":**  
*Marks where the historic route of the national historic trail crosses a trail*




### Pedestrian Sign - Size Options



**16" W x 24" H  
Aluminum sign**



**12" W x 12" H  
Aluminum sign**



**3" W x variable H  
Carsonite post  
and sticker**

