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American Trails  
Fundamentals of National Recreation Trails  
Thursday, June 30, 2022  
10:00AM - 11:30AM Pacific

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>> Candace: Thank you to everyone for joining us for the webinar today. Fundamentals of national recreation trails. I am Candace Gallagher director of operations and webinar coordinator for American trails this is our 164th webinar in American trails advancing webinar trails it's free and is being recorded and includes real-time closed captioning in English and offers free learning credit link to closed captioning if you do not see them, and attendees will receive a follow-up email from me with the recording, transcript, reinforcement slides and a bunch of links as well as learning how to get help within two days following the webinar we are saving time for questions at the end of the webinar but we welcome you to send your questions anytime during today's presentation through the Q&A icon at the bottom of your screen. I want to thank the partners today that include the National Park Service, US Forest Service, bureau of land management and federal highway administration. I'm excited to introduce our webinar presenters, we have Peter Bonsall a National Trails Program Specialist, we also have Matt Able the assistant national program manager with the US Forest Service, we have Mike Passo Executive Director of American trails and finally, we have Andy Griffith founder of Plum Island outsource who has experienced with does the needed national recreation trails and I will hand control over to Peter Bonsall . It is recognized trails preserving and celebrating our nation's pathways. To get started we will have Matt Able talk over a little bit of background.

>> Matt: Thanks, Peter Bonsall. What is the national recreation trails? Back in 1968 the national trail system act created what we know as national recreation trails in these have to be existing Lander water-based trails, you cannot propose a proposed trail for a NRT it has to be on the ground but the idea is to provide close to home recreational opportunities including federal, state, tribal and local glands and connect to the national trail network and designated by Secretary of Interior with secretary of agriculture so interior is over BLM. Why the idea was to elevate trails, all types for all different kinds of people. It is just a national designation that lets us recognize outstanding trails in urban and rural settings and all types of use in skills and physical abilities it's a way for us to elevate trails for everybody. The idea is to use your [indiscernible] of our existing trail, stimulate development of new trails throughout the U.S. We want to provide access to urban and rural communities, NRT's are great way, they can draw people in to rule and local communities provide healthy recreation opportunities for the American public there is all kinds of different NRT's we covered different uses including all terrains all settings, equestrian hiking, horseback, ATV all sorts of things including water trails, for an art the, there is apparently over 1300, we cover all 50 states including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico you can see the list on the right shows you the very first NRT the first one is in Missouri and some of the newest ones designated in the last couple of years that's a list of how many have been designated in the last few years and now I will pass it over to Peter Bonsall.

>> Peter: Let's start off by going what makes a trail eligible for NRT designation it has to be a trail established either through construction or use and is passable by at least one or more of the following including but not limited to foot traffic, stock, equestrian, watercraft, bicycles, recreational vehicles, motorcycles, ATVs four wheel drive vehicles. Keep in mind roads and highways suitable for passenger car travel are not eligible for NRT eligibility. It must be open to public use have no gaps and designated constructed and maintained according to best management practices. Trails that demonstrate the state-of-the-art in design management practices are especially encouraged to apply for NRT designations. Next, trails in compliance with applicable land use plans and environmental laws. Any environmental assessments, whatever laws applicable must be addressed. As Matt Able stated the trails in existence would be available for public use for at least 10 years. A planned trail is not eligible it has to be built and have no gaps. All public and private property owners of the trail Lancer waters have been notified and given the written consent and support for designation. We will touch more on this later in the presentation under frequently asked questions. Trails on state, local government or private land or anything other than federal government must have a letter of support from the appropriate state trail administrator. If anyone is interested who that may be, I can provide the contact information for your state trail administrator website. With that, I will turn it over to Mike Passo to discuss the benefits of trail designation.

>> Mike: I'm Executive Director of American trails and we tend to manage the national recreational trails data ship that is why we are coming in and I wanted to take a second to kind of tell you what I think about the NRT's and why they are super valuable. We have this great national trail system one-of-a-kind in the world. It is really well-maintained and the diamonds of those are the scenic and historic trails. And I see national recreational trails is kind of the more dynamic and changing and growing element to the national trail systems. We have an added and national scenic trail for a long time or historic trail, it takes a lot to get those in place and they are super well-managed by organization. But NRT's and that is the way we look at them they make the connections, they allow diverse use, equitable access to our national trail system by connecting to communities so when we are looking for NRT's out in the world to get the designation they have this great following best management practices but we want them to connect and provide equitable access to trails. I think that is what is exciting about the NRT system, it's growing get 10 to 30 new trails every year that can be typed and designated that way and put out there to provide those key connections. Some of the key benefits becoming a NRT you get on the NRT database currently over 1300 trails so people can find the NRT's in their area and no they are finding high quality trails. The database has been managed for I don't even know how long. And we are now kind of thinking how to amplify that process so people while they are visiting a city I can say hey, let's look for a NRT and visit it. One of the benefits is free signs, even if you are a designated or new NRT you can call us up in American trails and get some signs for the designated and give you that visual stamp of approval. In the future we started working with a group called "smart outdoors" that has a really unique sign program where you can work with them to get free signs for your trail whether you are a NRT or not they go after

sponsorship for those signs and maintenance dollars for the trail that is involved. That's a pretty cool program is being flushed out now and you can keep an eye out for that in terms of age good focus on the NRT end every year we run a photo contest and we encourage you to send photos it's a great way to spread the word and we put all of those great photos in our database so people can see what they are getting into when they want to visit one of your trails. It's on American trails and you want really pretty trail photos you can use in your presentation that is what it is for. Feel free to download those and give credit where credit is due. Something relatively new, a few years it go we started the NRT ambassador, we can take on the NRT's some of the ones from the '70s and '80s we don't know if they still are there. We need people to go out and check on them to see if the data in the database is correct. And to connect with land managers, make sure they understand they have a NRT that has one of these diamonds they should be spreading the word. We are looking at our ambassadors to kind of go out and visually true test our trails and provide support to land managers, that can hopefully get a cadre of people in the area that can care about their NRT. As I mentioned kind of a future plan with this we are working with top developers which streamlines tasks so they can go out to a trail and update the information kind of just-in-time, take some pictures and give a better direction to the trail that kind of thing. Eventually, we want to map all the trails out there but that is a big task and that will take years and years. It is an exciting program, I think. Pass the word, if you can about becoming an ambassador and finding folks. One of the less understood elements is the opportunity for funding when you are an NRT. While there is currently no direct funding for NRT's, very often in many states, when you apply for grant for the national recreation trails program which is funded by generally the Department of Transportation in each state and managed by state trail administrators, union state, there is often the opportunity to say you are a national recreational trail that gives you a bit of a leg up in those funding opportunities. For two things, sometimes it's obvious will give you more points in their system but in your narrative saying you are a national recreation trail finding gives you that stamp of approval that any funder, foundation date or federal funder they will look at that oh, yeah that trail has gone through rigorous process of ensuring they are following good management practices and they will be around for a long time therefore I feel safer in providing funding. In the future this year, we would like to fund raise around the idea of having a designated NRT program within the trail fund that focuses on providing maintenance needs of NRT's so that system as a whole can be more sustainable and solid. We are going to work hard to fund raise around that keep an eye on the trail fund for those opportunities as well. Next, I think I turn it over to Matt Able.

>> Matt: Thanks, Mike Passo. How we become an NRT, there is two separate processes, one is basically for Department of Agriculture and forest service process and basically everything else falls under the Department of Interior process. If you trail is on federal land administered by the Department of Agriculture which is primarily for service there are a few other smaller agencies but if it's a Department of agriculture trail the Forest Service has the authority to designate NRT's and that authority has been delegated down to regional foresters. We no longer asked the secretary of agriculture to sign NRT applications that can be done on a region by region basis but we do work closely with the Washington office to make sure the application package has

everything needed in the trail is worthy of NRT designation. For building they are nominated and approved using an internal application and that is also available on the American trails website should be a link to it. Pretty simple form, really. It includes the recommendation and approval typically done by numbers of the public, you need an accurate trail location description. Usually a good quality map. A trail history that provides context and why it would be a good nomination, nominee for a NRT designation. The trail description and management objective. That is a little more nuts and bolts that the trail entails, the surface type, management objectives what type of uses the trail open to. In a best management practice the organization nominating the trail they have for maintenance and management of that trail. Assessment of impacts that's to get people to think about would NRT designation change the nature of the trail? And what kind of impacts may be associated with increased use with increased recognition, inks of that nature. Make sure that is being taken into consideration on the front and not something we are trying to fix on the back end. And then a public statement stating this trail will be open for public use for the next 10 years and I think that pretty much covers the US Forest Service application process and I will pass it back to Peter Bonsall.

>> Peter: Thank you. As mentioned there are two different processes one for the Department of Public of aquaculture if you trail is on federal, state, tribal or local land, it has been delegated down to the National Park Service on behalf of the department of interior to review and nominate these trails for designation by the secretary of interior. The Department of Interior has the authority to designate these NRT's other than Department of agriculture. The process is a little different as the Forest Service was internal the Department of Interior process is a public facing application with specific criteria. This slide goes over some of the questions we ask in this public application, also some steps we take to finally get to the steps of a designation. Within the application itself we ask for basic trail information, name, location, mileage, descriptions. Counties, congressional districts of the basic information you would need to know about a trail. Contact information. This is in the form of a trail manager or managing organization or public information contact, anything the public can contact use that information when we submit our recommendations. Number three is key, owner consent support, as we discussed ineligibility section there must be order of consent for any of the landowners where the trail is. And also if any of the trail is not on federal land they have to have that letter of support from the state trail of ministry those two things are required if you meet these conditions. We have things we ask for a lot of high-quality trail photos this can include the trail shed, scenic views, pictures of people using the trail. It gives a sense of what is really there on the ground that we give our view team in the public a sense of how the trail is. If we ask for all we know who the trail is. Some additional supporting materials this could be to upload your best management planner other support materials like letters of support these are more from the community members. Say there is a local nonprofit or business that really loves this trail. Let's take a business for example, this trail brings in a lot of people from their bike shop or running shop and use this trail. Those letters of support the help amplify the importance of the trail to the public. This is not required but they are highly encouraged to show how much trail meets the community. There will be a signed signature page that you meet trail eligibility and meet requirements and sign off and once you submit all of

those pieces of information your application is complete. What happens after that? You must submit all of this information by November first that is the deadline for submitting all of these new pieces of information. Once that happens, the review process has been delegated to the National Park Service and works closely with staff, wildlife service, those submitted applications we review them by our team on this end. That review process usually takes about 2 to 3 months, during that time we may reach out with clarifying questions, if a piece of information is missing order really just make sure that the trail and its application meet the criteria and are as great as they can be. Once the review team has approved an application we submit a package to the secretary of interior for official designation. Just a couple of notes the deadline to submit any application is November 1st, we haven't touched on national water trails, they have a slightly different application process that focuses more on best an adjustment practice we will get to that in the frequently asked questions. A program gets questions about, just want to address here, NRT's is recognized the federal government with the consent of any of those landowners we talked about that have jurisdiction over the NRT, there are questions in regard to adjacent landowners, this landowner consent as stated in the mandatory criteria and eligibility, that consent is for who owns that piece of land. Sometimes there may be an easement so whoever owns that trail tread must provide that letter of consent.<sup>3</sup> All potential trails must apply for the distinction of NRT just get grandfathered in you have to go through the designation process. You cannot use the term national recreation trail or signage unless you are designated. Keep that in mind. Another important thing here is upon designation as a NRT all management degrees once abilities remain with the land management entity unless on federal land and there is major practices set by different bureaus and agencies there is no federal oversight on the management of any land of federal lands. Keep in mind management responsibilities remain with the existing land management entity. We touch briefly on national water trails and they are a subset of national recreation trail system these are water-based recreation trails. These were established in 2012 under a secretary order 3319 that recognize national water trails as the category of national recreation trails. Actually be a webinar next week directly on national water trails. Feel free to ask questions but there will be a more discussion next week of national water trails. With all of that, thank you all for attending the first part of our webinar here the more federal side, programmatic side with that we pass it to our guest speaker Andy will talk about his experience with national recreation trails.

>> Andy: Excuse me. I am Andy Griffith. I am a volunteer, let's say directly with the national wildlife refuge which I am -- my definition for volunteer of fish and wildlife service. I've been volunteering since 2004, and before I moved to Newburyport, I have visited my first spot which is an NRT. I've been a board member of the friends of Parker River, I am still a member and a lot of my experience in bringing to this talk is basically one always a member, the big issue was how to replace the hellcat interpreter trail as it was called then which was built in the '60s, because with the water for a time it became problems and became unsafe. There was piecemeal repair going on at the time, but eventually it really needed to be replaced and redesigned. Not sure when I became a trail master, that was a special program, let's see. Let's go to the next slide. Actually, in my travels because I like walking trails, I looked on the NRT map and after a visit to

Niagara Falls, I found a NRT trail outside of Albany, New York and it did not have ambassadors so I figured why not? I was taking pictures there anyway. There was one other NRT that is special for a lot of reasons. It was called the Carson trail at the racial Carson national wildlife in Maine. I became ambassador of that. For the most part I kept the information on the NRT website up to date. Unfortunately, to be honest, with this program preparing for it, I did some investigation which is my nature, through the valuation of this presentation I found out that the Carson trail no longer exists. At least what it was named but I found one on the NRT and doesn't have an ambassador so I will have to check that out. There is some basic information on the hellcat boardwalk trail, it is called boardwalk trail because it is NRT compliant there are not any steps in terms of resiliency the boardwalk doesn't go in the water anymore and it is very sound in the way it was built with the idea it was wetlands so water is not totally avoidable, according to present standards it is done and we will read more about that. I have a lot of pictures that I have taken on hellcat. So I had just a few for this talk, but the nice thing about the winter pictures I found was they were uploaded from a visitor that I assume that found out about hellcat from the NRT database so I felt that pointed out a big advantage and I volunteer at the front desk are the information desk at the visitor center and we do get a lot of new visitors to the area. We get international visitors relatively recently at the observation platform on hellcat. I talked with folks Iran who are now in the United States and I thought that was very interesting. They were talking a language I could not understand so I asked where they were from. I put up a URL to a YouTube video that the recently retired -- this is a service manager introducing people to the new trail. I hope it is very good. And the slides of the gentleman in the wheelchair, that might be Matt, but it shows now it's NRT compliant. This is the trail I discovered from the NRT and I was happy I walked it with my wife and now I am the ambassador. Fortunately, I have to admit I haven't been back there since, but also I think if memory serves me correctly somebody asked me about why I was ambassador, just because I can't get out there that often. To go back, that is not a fish and wildlife service trail. What Mike Passo was talking about in terms of the state trail, I don't know whether that is true -- anyway, I am retired now, when I worked I worked for asset.com and I was in the search operations group so got to know specifics how they did search, I think the search engine is still available. Also, they ended up teaming with Google and I thought why don't I check to see where hellcat comes out the URL is how Google determines searches. Anyway, and there we have it that it came up number one. Now, number two is the nonprofit I found at Plum Island Outdoors, Inc. Sort of a side note it actually started and I was on the board of the friends of national wildlife preservation and the reason it was started on that it replaced what was the existing website for friends of national wildlife and came about because they gentleman in the Washington DC area who had been the manager, retired from the fish and wildlife service and formed a company that did a smart phone app that one of our smart phone owned by young adults who tend to be under smart phones. Walk a trail and also to the national Park systems and basically they could play a game, answer questions, get points through their smart phone on the questions contained what they observed but it was very expensive and I could not get anybody to approve the money so the manager challenged me to do something on the website. I started doing that. That was probably when I came across American trails. I guess third is sort of a competition and it says interpretive trails. I see basically a great thing was

pointed out earlier today was about the ambassadors, they can go out to the trail and get the NRT updated which I think is a great benefit. Would has gotten important to me very lately is being able to have -- you people that have impairment such as wheelchair-bound, to enjoy the great outdoors. So it's very nice this way the person her name is Alice Sheppard she's a person of color and knows the impact of racism especially when you have a disability and I have met her at a weeklong conference in Boston and she was part of a sub conference and I got to know for personally I tried to get her to come out to Newberry but there was various problems it's been a hardship, but she does phenomenal dancing, she considers the wheelchair part of her body and just reviewing things for this presentation I found there is a video on her website that shows her swinging from trees the outdoors on a wheelchair. I thought that was phenomenal. The code you see you can put your smart phone on that and you can go to her website and learn all about this phenomenal lady. Final slide. How our host Candace got to know me I was talking -- I knew I had to talk with the recently retired, the manager of visitor services because I feel it's really important to get the water trail as a trail. He had a lot to do with it but I wanted to have a conversation with him before he retired and left so I could get management of the refuge to support this project of mine. So, basically, at that time, the front picture was this awful set of stairs. That doesn't quite do it. I wanted to get it updated as soon as possible and I had forgotten the proper person to send the picture too, replacement picture, so I filled out the contact form and Candace was right on that. Take you very much, Candace. Anyway, we have a trail map. I want out there yesterday after sending the next last version of this presentation to Candace because I really wanted to get it out there because I was thinking a lot about it so the picture was taken yesterday by my wife and we were on a water trail. The coyote was observed by the retired visitor service manager he used to be a national Park manager from the water trail. The middle complex, Matt had responded Monday thanking me for what I did for the refuge on Saturday so he thanked me, the email I sent to Candace about getting the picture replaced, without the stairs, he took the time to add his support at least verbally and that is without knowing all the benefits of getting the trail designated. In the slideshow.

>> Candace: Thank you and the presentation earlier from Peter Bonsall, Mike Passo and Matt Able I'm going to share my question slide here a little bit. We don't have a lot of questions I know Peter Bonsall and Matt Able were answering behind the scenes and I will probably go over those if we don't get any more questions that you come in during the live webinar. William is asking just if you can confirm, I think this question is for Matt Able, can you confirm what you met by gaps?

>> Matt: The concept being the trail is complete and without gaps means there is not a break in the trail so you can't designate 10 miles of NRT trail and you've got a two-mile section in the middle not constructed yet, you've got a section that goes through private property in the private property owner does not want to grant permission for that NRT designation that would create a gap in the middle.

>> Candace: Awesome. Karen is asking, they have a trail designated in 2002 when it wasn't fully

built out does that designation apply to the entire trail how do we submit the IMS data to show the entire trail?

>> Matt: Probably a Peter Bonsall question.

>> Peter: Let me guess it's not a forest service rabbit happy to answer this question. The designation only applies to the segment you applied for. I understand trails, extend, change throughout the nature of the lifetime I was not in this position in 2002, but we had the same criteria. Would imagine the designation applies just to the section that was built at the time and my next response would go to various questions I see here. We are the process of finalizing a national recreation trail update form so if you're trail has changed and mild still meets mandatory criteria, it has been rerouted, something like that all mandatory criteria still exists, and you have the designated we are working on formalizing the process to document that so the underground trail really reflects national recreation trail status. Please state tuned, the final processes on getting that together and we will do our best to give public information about that once it is publicized.

>> Mike: Can I add part of that was how to get GIS data you can send that to American trails and we are able to add centerline data for trails until it is updated -- you can send us the entire link but until it is updated officially like Peter Bonsall says, we can't add the full GIS data but we can add data approved and I believe Mike Passo at American trails. Org is best at getting that data.

>> Candace: She did confirm it is not a forest service trail. Keith is asking do you have a benchmarking report that identifies what are the best management practices or standards that meet the NRT criteria?

>> Peter: Good question. We don't have a set one in place it sometimes falls to the reviewers and they are really trail experts they been in the game for a while with building trail plans making test management practice plan. A lot of those reviewers look at it with their expertise. The best management practices could probably be found on the American trails website they have information about what makes a good management practice. It is dependent on the land if it is a new trail, you can think about all of those ADA or ABA trail standards. You can look to those for best management practices is it being maintained? Is it being built to standards? Does it meet all environmental compliance? Is there a maintenance planning lace? Are people taking care of it? How is that done? Best management practices are a good lens. If you are curious for something specific it will take research on your end if you are interested, you can look at the national water trails application and they have a best management practices that those trails afford to give you an inside of sometimes what we think about, if you wanted to look at that application, that could give you kind of a benchmark of what to look for. These applications but NRT's are available on American trails website.

>> Candace: Right. Jeremy is asking what with the process be of the potential national

recreational trail both USDA and non-USDA land?

>> Peter: Great question there is some coordination. Part of our general rule of thumb is whoever has got the most trail on their land is the one responsible for it. If it goes to the forest service there is still going to have to be that coordination with the other landowners outside of the forest service plan between the agencies to resolve that. But it would fall to whoever has the most trail.

>> Candace: Group.

>> Peter: Something that does occur sometimes may -- you sometimes the other doesn't want to do it. We have seen that happen.

>> Candace: We have a question glad to hear about the offices on NRT ground treatment efforts he's aware of older NRT's which are not representative can one of the presenters speak to this for substandard NRT?

>> Peter: It's a very simple process. If the land management agency or whoever deems the trail is not adequate they don't want to be part of the system, he does too much work to maintain it, build it out, it is falling apart we have seen this on a handful public trails were a massive storm comes through our landslide wipes out the trail. The trail is closed forever. It's a very simple process, if you write to American trails either myself or someone in the forest service you no longer want designation, we take that is formal communication it is going to be de-listed we document and archive it remove it from the database and pretty much remove that status for many public information and keep it for our official record.

>> Candace: It seems like you might be answering this question.

>> Mike: I was trying to answer online and then I hit answer live. Great question, Keith. I am on a working group with open stream maps now trying to tackle that specific issue. We are involved in monitoring it and trying to figure out the process with all trails and the federal land management agencies trying to figure out how to deal with user generated trails are non-designated trails when a volunteer posts a trail on open Street maps. It's a complicated process that is currently being worked through. It is kind of involving a lot of stakeholders and I am sure it will take a little bit of time but can be a great source of data and we are figuring out how to best interact with that source of data. I also wanted to address the other issue, Keith, developing a reference for best management practices. We are actually working on that and hoping to have that a part of the application process probably in 2023 moving on. That is kind of in the works just as an FYI.

>> Candace: It looks like the other questions may have been answered there is one comment in regard to their being over 1300 trails, thinking maybe it is time to connect these together, one option is provided by the American discovery trail concept. Kind of wondering if you have any

thoughts what is American trails think about this concept he mentions the -- it uses many of the recreational trails and long-distance bicycle trails and connects several of the historic trails however the American discovery trails adopted in Congress has other trails.

>> Mike: This is Mike Passo with American trails we love meeting American discovery trails it has really great at providing some of that connection. We don't have a designated position, I guess, on the congressional bill that is currently being considered. I don't feel like American trails understands a discovery trail is added with the ramifications of that are. We are holding our thoughts about that until we understand with the federal land managers have to deal with a whole new category how that would work in the umbrella the national trail system back but the American discovery trail is a great example of pulling together different types of trails with local trails and scenic and historical trails all pieced together across the country is a very cool concept.

>> Candace: Great. How are out-of-state tourists and travelers encouraged to discover these trails?

>> Peter: One of the benefits is being added to the national recreation trail database, that was the 1300 plus trails across the country I can search the database for anywhere you are going. There is all kind of search functions what kind of trail you're looking for? Is it a bike trail? Equestrian? The database is a bunch of different functionalities you can look for it is a geographic display that is the best way to discover any NRT.

>> Candace: Great. Natalie in Canada mentions they don't have an equivalent of the national recreation trails and at the local level they are using trail forks as a starting point to create public facing map you have advice or recommendations for creating a public facing map or other mapping efforts to create trail information, et cetera?

>> Mike: That is probably me. American trails just kind of took it on to try and do some level of mapping and ended up being quite a process, I would say. I don't know that I can go into it. I love to talk to you Natalie maybe off-line how maybe inform what we did. I think there is limitations because we found it one point along NRT largely through Google Earth trying to find a key trailhead but that has limitations it doesn't show the full length of the trail so part of the reason we thought we needed to engage our ambassadors to try to get centerline data or get a download of the centerline data the land manager may already have and we don't even know about it. I think there is a difficult balancing act between on the ground truth and just some digging into Google Earth a little bit and finding some information. I think it is not ideal to have one location on each trail but it's a stepping stone and that is I think how we approach it currently.

>> Candace: Great.

>> Matt: I will jump in the second part is how to communicate trail and etiquette that is one of

the things we is federal land managers are struggling with the trail forks, the [indiscernible], all those third party apps that are being created that show or trails may be that doesn't show if the trail is open to the public what kind of uses are allowed it just shows the line that's a hard question to answer as far showing all of them and is something we are working with open Street maps and other app developers to try to make it possible for land managers to include some of that etiquette and use information so we relay accurate information for users as opposed to lines on a map.

>> Candace: Great. We don't have additional questions, we still do have some time. It looks like we have answered all of the questions so far. I will share all of the Q&A with you guys once we finalize, I will show that with you in a follow-up email as well as add as a resource to the website so Peter Bonsall you can go ahead.

>> Peter: I want to address Pete's question. I would be happy to jump in a quick for anyone who may not know establishment under the national trail system after three categories of trail, national scenic trail, national historic trail and national historic trail national scenic are congressionally designated while scenic is recognized and designated by Secretary of agriculture or secretary of interior. The biggest thing is how they are designated scenic and historic taken act of Congress there's a lot of back end feasibility studies it has to be recommended has to go through that whole congressional process and they are usually 100 miles or more it has to have national historical significance scenic trails have to be nationally significant as well and have more physical based elements to address. So scenic trails are actually designated pretty long process, NRT's are meant to be more streamlined providing recreation recognizing existing trails and those can be ignited by Secretary of Interior.

>> Candace: Great. Stephen has a question off the top of your head do we know how long the longest recreation trail is?

>> Peter: I just looked this up. It is in Florida. It's a paddling trail. As another plug in going to the NRT and enter how long you want to find a trail it's 1500 miles the Florida's circle navigational saltwater paddling trail.

>> Candace: Awesome. What about the shortest in order to be recognized or designated as a national recreation trail?

>> Peter: There is no length I think I have seen some anywhere from like a mile, mile and a half, just a local community trail it meets the criteria, brings people together. It's short. A nature preserve or something within a community. No limitation how long the trail can be.

>> Candace: Great. So Reno has another question. I'm not sure who to ask this to but are there apps being created to make the trails safe and have some charging station for communication on trail to call for help not necessarily a NRT question.

>> Matt: There are some inherent risks when you're venturing off the beaten path to explore a trail and get that trail experience. So be prepared on the front end is the best way to stay safe and there are apps providing information about the trail, the condition, what to expect on the trail so having all that information up front is one of your best ways to stay safe on the trail and charging stations I see some County, local units the politics possibly having something along those lines but in general they won't be adding that type of infrastructure but speaking to that being prepared upfront if your phone is fully charged when you hit the trail hopefully it will last the whole distance another options would be additional battery packs or solar charger to keep your phone up and running that's not a guarantee are a lot of trails you can venture out of cell service. I would not say rely on your phone it always pays to do your homework upfront and try to get an actual paper map when available so you've got something to fall back on.

>> Candace: Great. Go ahead, Mike Passo.

>> Mike: To add on one of the groups we started working with, smart outdoors, I talked about them earlier in terms of providing sign services but a part of that service is each sign has a node on top of it I don't know what they call it. I should probably not be speaking out of turn but it's a way to connect and understand where you are and where the nearest emergency services are. Those would be more urban areas, you can find them in more urban settings. But difficult to find in less urban.

>> Candace: Keith has another great question, we have considered a trail mentor program for trail managers who have set a goal for obtaining NRT status.

>> Mike: We have considered it we have not implemented it and especially recently it is kind have come in -- I guess functionally there's a bit of a limit to the number of NRT's we can do every year but we would love to see 50 rather than 10 in one key way to do that might be providing that technical assistance. American trails does it formally but -- informally I should say, you can call us we will help you through the process and answer your questions and tell you what you are trail needs to do to have a leg up in getting the designation and so will Peter Bonsall, actually. It's not a hidden thing we will do everything we can to help out but we would love to formalize that program and the benefits as well. That may be something down the road.

>> Matt: When you say best practices might also help, when that document is ready you are sort of the guide.

>> Peter: Something else to keep in mind if you're thinking about applying you can find the application questions ahead of time you can find it on American trails website. If you are thinking about this it will lay out what the questions are the mandatory criteria we talked about the mandatory documents you need so if you're planning to apply November 1st we are doing this webinar early, all the information what is needed is transparent out there. We think about

applying all of that information is at your fingertips and Mike Passo and myself are there.

>> Candace: Great. I think that about sums up the Q&A. I guess Matt Able, Mike Passo, Peter Bonsall or Andy if you have any last thoughts are words you want to share.

>> Matt: I want to throw out something I forgot to mention about the forest service applications the Department of Interior process is a little more formal and we don't have that November 1st deadline you can apply any time of year. We ask you apply by November 1st if you want to be included in the news releases and press that comes out before national trails they but our process does not have that hard deadlines.

>> Candace: Good point.

>> Peter: To follow up if you do apply on the interior side that is not a Black box, if we see something, you applied but there is more work to do or you are missing a document we will certainly follow-up with you. The channels of communication are there until the final applications are approved that is usually the beginning of March that gives November through February 2nd work with that if there are any changes you would need for additional resources.

>> Candace: Great. Thank you again to all of the presenters and attendees interested in this very important topic. The slides you see on your screen be emailed to everyone along with the recording and a transcript and all of their names are Lynn to the presenter's email and you can email American trails at NRT at American trails. Work and we will help answer your question or direct you to the right person to answer your question now or later on in the process if you are interested in getting designated as a national recreation trail. I want to thank our partners which include all of our presenters with the National Park Service, US Forest Service American trails Bureau of land banishment and federal highway administration. If you are enjoying these webinars these consider contributing as little as \$5. Your donation will go to the trail fund which Mike Passo recently mentioned during his presentation. It's a new grant program of American trails we help our inaugural grant process this year the deadline has passed but we are working hard for more funding for 2023 to offer more grants next year. I will select a couple of people following the webinar to receive our trail mug as a thank you. We hope you will join us for these upcoming webinars noted on your slides, including the webinar on National Water Trails taking place next week. A reminder that all webinars are free, including their learning credits. Thank you again to everyone for joining us and happy trails!