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American Trails
National Recreation Trails:
Designating Your Trail for NRT and NWT Status (2024 Update)
Thursday, August 29, 2024
10:00AM - 11:00AM Pacific

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>> Thank you for joining us for the webinar. National Recreation Trails: Designating Your Trail for NRT and NWT Status (2024 Update). My name is Candace Gallagher and I am the Director of Operations and Webinar Coordinator for American Trails. This is our 250th webinar in the American Trails Advancing Trails Webinar Series, we are celebrating this milestone during next week's webinar, stay tuned and please join us! This webinar is being recorded, includes real-time closed captioning in English and also offers free learning credits. Links to the quiz and survey will be in the chat box. You can turn on captions by clicking on the CC button at the bottom of your Zoom window and if another language is ever needed, just let us know. Attendees will receive a follow up email from me within 2 days with a link to the recording, transcript, resources slide with presenter email(s), and learning credit details. I want to thank our webinar partners that include Washington's Evergreen Coast, Professional TrailBuilders Association, iZone Imaging, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, USDA Forest Service. As well as The GrizBurger Fund. The GrizBurger Fund is a donor-advised fund that belongs to two regular working people who really love trails. They everyone to learn more about donor advised funds and how to use them to increase support for American Trails and the free education we provide. I am happy to introduce our presenters for today. Lindsay Brisko, National Trails System Specialist (Acting), National Park Service, Andy Welsh, Assistant National Trail Program Manager, USDA Forest Service, Alison Bullock, Community Planner, Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program, National Park Service, and Katie Johnson, River Operations Specialist, City of New Braunfels, Texas. I am excited to pass controls over to Lindsay to get started.

>> Can everyone see my screen? Perfect. I guess you can hear me. Perfect, I am Lindsay Briscoe, acting as the national trails specialist, thank you, I will start out by saying thank you, Candace, appreciate putting in this effort to talk about national recreation and water trails today. I want to thank American Trails for their great support with national recreation trails and this webinar. Today's learning, a couple items to go over at the top, you will hear us use acronyms, NRT stands for national recreation trails. And NWT, national water trail, we will start out talking about national wreck trails and move on to national water trails. You see some logos on the slides at the bottom left-hand corner. You will see the logos for national wreck trail and water trail and an item to note, if you see both icons on a slide, that also relates to water trails, if we talk about national wreck trails, you see the logo for that, we just don't want to duplicate information down the line so we bolted it all together and that is the indicator on what we are

talking about. We will go over a couple points today. The goals, what they are, the history, eligibility requirements, benefits of designation, how to apply, recent updates and frequently asked questions. To start, what are they, the national trail system, active in 1968, with the passing, three types of trails were established, scenic, historic, and we are talking about national recreation trails, what is unique is that they are existing land-based and water-based trails that provide for close to home recreational opportunities, federal, state, tribal, local lands, connected to the national trails system network, these differ from national scenic and historic trails that they are recognized and designated by the secretary of the interior or agriculture. When you look at the national scenic trails, historic trails, those are designated by an act of Congress. The goals are pretty broad. You can see them here basically looking to have a wide range of opportunities, recreational opportunities across different skill sets, abilities or communities to the outdoors and provide that access to stimulate tourism, and just help provide healthy recreation opportunities for folks. And generally the goal is highlighting the best of the best within your trail system. Those are the goals and we try to highlight them, highlight these and what you have that shines into those systems. Because there are so many of these, 1300, these will be the trails that are close to home. Hopefully easy to access from where you are, not far away. NRT history, history wise you can see a wide range across the country. In all 50 states, in the 1968 act, it took until 1969 to get the first one and in 1970, the next two. If you look now, where we are going, last year was four new NRT's, previous to that we were getting 10 a year, great numbers we are pulling in for NRT's. It is a great show of how people are using trails and people are using more trails, it is growing in popularity. More and more coming online every year. We move to trail eligibility. What makes a proposed national trail, a trail proposed to be a national recreation trail. First off, it has to be a trail. That is key number 1. The definition of a trail is a trail where it is established through construction or use by one or more of the following. Including but not limited to foot traffic, stock, equestrian, watercraft, bicycles, in-line skates, wheelchairs, cross-country skis, off-road recreation vehicles such as motorcycles and snowmobiles, ATVs and four wheel drive vehicles. It is a wide breadth that can be considered a trail. Just to note, road and highways suitable for passengers, those are not eligible for designation. The trail must also be open to public use. It can't have gaps, to be designated construction and according to best management practices in keeping the use anticipated. It is trails that demonstrate state-of-the-art design and management are encouraged to apply for the designation. The next bit about trail eligibility is compliance with applicable land-use and plans and environmental laws. The trail is also inexistent and for public use in the next 10 years and we have longevity within the system moving forward. And very importantly, all public and private property owners of the trail lands or waters that have been notified and given written consent to support the designation. Lastly, we are talking about trail eligibility and another key point, trails on state, local, government or private lands, anything other than federal must have a letter of support from the appropriate state trail administrator. Lastly, will have a formal letter that goes in with it. Next, we will look at benefit. There are many benefits to having NRT, why there is so much support, the benefits going in for designation, there are five listed and we will go through each of these on the slide. We have a national database, signage, signage promotion that is associated with the trail, there is a photo contest, there is the ambassador program, there is also funding opportunities. Looking at

the benefits of the national database, first of all, inclusion of over 1300 searchable trails. You can find a link, there is a link and we can try to post this in the chat so you can try it out. It is really sweet. You can search a trail by name, specific uses, states, you can search by the agency that manages it. It is to further promote the trail on a national network. If you are searching for a trail, one of the things I like to do if I am in a new state I pop on and say I want to hike in this place, I find the state, see if there are trails near a vacation spot I am going to visit. Once you become an NRT, you get access and this is managed by American Trails. Another benefit of NRT is the signage. Signage upon designation, formal designation by the department of the interior or agriculture, you received two 8 inch by 8 inch metal signs, there are three 3 1/2 inch by 3 1/2 inch metal signs and these can be used to place strategic locations along the trail and trailheads, other designations where you can place the signs, and after designation you can apply for more plastic signs, there is a cache right now that we can give out and also low cost metal signs if you need additional signage later on. Low cost through American Trails. When we are looking at the photo contest, American Trails hosts an annual photo contest. If you have not been on the website, there is a link and I will click it now but we can maybe put it in the chat and you can go later. I would emphasize going and checking it out. There are incredible photos from across the country. We have almost 500-600 photos entered every year and it is a great way to highlight your trail, highlight your trail itself and get excited about hiking, sometimes before the summer or spring, when I get excited about hiking, I can jump on even in the winter. And start to look at the photos and plan on some hikes. One of the great benefits is the ambassador program. The ambassador program, American Trails leads this program. There are over 300 individuals in all 50 states. Committed to improving national recreation trails. One of the things the ambassadors do, they are trained for safety and consistency of data gathering, they reach out to trail managers, agency staff to build understanding of national recreation trails and water trails. And ensure the trail meets standards of quality. They help to identify Center Line GPS and ensure quality information about designated national recreation trails and are up-to-date on the website and database. They are the people on the ground making sure the public information is correct and help to improve the data online. And finally the benefit, improved funding opportunities, some of the other benefits like I mentioned improving funding opportunities. Specifically for your NRT. There is no direct funding for national recreation trails but being an NRT can improve your fundraising opportunities. Many state recreation programs, funding provides funding for trails that are part of the national trail system. It is one of those and the status provides outside acknowledgment of the quality, legitimizes your trail in it tangible way and helps improve your fundraising story. And because of the vast history of trails it has is ghosted, American Trails built the national trail fund that made the priority for funding and of course having the proof of motion, the recognition can improve your fundraising story. Economic development and all the great things that come along with people getting out to your trails. I will stop here and pass it over to Andy.

>> Thanks, Lindsay. My name is Andy and I am the assistant national trail program manager for the Forest Service. I work for the D.C. office but I sit in California. I am on fire assignment so I am a little tired but I think I can get this done. After all the benefits you heard, this is how you

apply. There are two trucks for this. One through the USDA Forest Service and one through the Department of the Interior and their process. And it just depends on where the trail is located, as to which process you will want to wind up going through. For us in the forest service, our top signatory is the regional Forrester and there are nine, it doesn't have to go all the way to the secretary of the interior. The process is a little easier in the sense that the top line signatory isn't at the secretary level, what you will do for this is work with the local unit and you will go through the process with them and all the way out from the district ranger to the Forest supervisor, then to the regional Forrester and I have an example that Candace will share with you after this conversation. She will send it out with a PowerPoint. You will see what we have done in the past recently with the Mann Gulch national recreation trail. This is the main bits on how you would do it for the forest service and you will see it in the example I will share with you after this. DOI, step in if I say this one. I am not as familiar with this process but the topline secretary is the secretary of the interior, you will get ground support, get with the local unit that is a local administrator if it is not on Park service or DOI, managed land, whoever the local person is the trail resides on. And you will start with that and we will talk about what the actual application looks like. You are at a similar level of information, the DUI has their own process as I said. You can see looking for the basic information. You can package it up and the difference with the forest service, there is no real deadline because it is local unit driven, the Park service has an application deadline of November 1st. What we do have in 2024 that is new, there is a new application system. If you are applying on DOI managed land or any land that is not the forest service managed land he would go to this application process through the American Trails website. That has this new and improved, you can update existing trails as well. These are just frequently asked questions which I don't see a whole lot in the chat. These are ones we hear a lot as the administrators of these NRT's. Take a look at those. I think a lot of those cover the designation piece. You have to apply, the management still doesn't become Park service managed trail or forest service managed trail, it stays with whoever was managing it to begin with and we will talk next about the national water trails and what that looks like. Allison, I believe that is you.

>> Thanks, Andy. I am Allison with the National Park Services Conservation assistance program. We provide technical and planning assistance to any local or nonprofit lead trail system, we do work with River based recreation. And conservation projects. We are 25 states nationally but we cover the whole nation. I want to talk specifically about the national water trail designation because it is different from the standard NRT process and there are some distinctions that I think would be helpful to share. If you can go to the next slide. National water trails were created as a subset of the national recreation trail system. In 2012. Before that you could still get designation as a national recreation trail. For your local project and meet the standard requirements of NRT but we are looking at elevating safety, conservation, and in general, economic development of tourism associated with water trails at a national level. The secretary or of interior in 2012 granted an order to establish a new designation under the national recreation trails banner. These can also be designated by the Forest Service or the secretary of the interior. Like I said, some of our goals were to help restore and protect waterways across the

country and to highlight the best exemplary examples of water trails that we can share with others, this is the one to go to for how to do it right. This is a project that did it while. In programming and education that I would use as an example. We are trying to develop a collection of water trails across the country that are the best of the best. That is the challenge we have for you in the national water trail process. Safety is foremost and we are working to develop a network of practitioners, those that have received national designation, I hope it is in the near future to continue to involve a community of practice around water trails with those individuals. To date we have 37 nationally designated water trails. The most recent one, Katie Johnson will talk about in a few minutes. The range of length is a mile and 1/2. To 631 miles on the Alabama River. Designation can be flatwater, moving water, ocean, marsh, rivers, lakes, canals, we have had quite a variety of waterways so far and receive designation. You can also have systems that are connected together. For example, in Kentucky a recent designation occurred on the Nolan and Green River's. That are connected together in the National Park. Next, great. I want to talk about how the national water trails is really significantly different from the NRT process. And that comes in the best management practices. We are looking for national water trail applicants to have successfully achieved and we look at all of them, all seven of the best management practices, fairly equally. And making sure they are being addressed and in a quality way. It is a fairly stringent process. The applicants go through to get the award of national water trail. If you think you have one of the best examples in the country of a water trail and you want that top tier designation, you might be willing to put in the effort to go after this designation as well and I would encourage you to. Recreation opportunities are -- go back for a minute. I do want to highlight the issue today, not just as a river or a lake that exists at the access that should exist and be in good shape. There should be a good quality of the access points. A lot of that depends on what asset is and whether it has to be a man built access point, natural surface access point will suffice but we do look at the quality and what shape it is in, whether it is being managed and we look at the distance between access points. Particularly when we have a trail that is on a river system. And how far apart those points are that often depends on the resource itself. A river moving 3 miles per hour, current, having it five miles between access point is a good rule of thumb. We have had some that have stretched it past that. Closer to nine. Anything over 10 really raises alarm bells. Among the review committee and we look closely at that if they have camping that is in between and provides for a safe place to stop and spend the night or get through a storm, that kind of thing. That continuous access on a timely basis geared towards a beginner paddler and someone who is not from the area, familiar with River, we are trying to make sure you are providing a quality experience for them. Water trails should be contiguous, they should connect together and access should not have gaps, if you have a water trail you are proposing that is 100 miles long but between mile marker 40 and 60 there is no access, we would want you to scale your application down to where you have continuous access that is safe. We have worked with applicants to do that in several applications. We look at how dams affect your waterways, especially your lakes, reservoirs. Other you have looked at measures to portage around those structures, whether there is safety signage, things of that nature. We look at whether you made the effort to put together trip itinerary so people know what to expect, how to find access points, where it is safe to park. Things of that nature. Helpful hints for people who are not

from the area, what is the water like, is it a class one River, class three River, things about being mindful of who the property owners are, things like that. It is helpful to put together trip itineraries, maps, as you provide mapping, we want to encourage accessibility. Where it is feasible. Providing a handicap accessible access point where it is feasible within the geography you are working with. It is really important as an objective. We recommend in the recreation section that you provide a charge. If you have a river specifically that has multiple access points or a lake, or an ocean, anywhere where there are multiple access points you are working with, provide a chart that shows the distance between those access points, the names of the access point, often we have river mile 1.1, access point Hampton Beach, it is 4.9 miles to the next access point, which is Joan's gap, for instance. Providing the information and to the land management entity is at each access point is really helpful for us as we go through, otherwise we have to dig for that information. Next slide. Education is the second-best management practice and we are looking at what is being done deliberately from either the applicant themselves or the partners they are working with to reach out to the public and provide educational experiences, educational learning through programming as well as information on kiosks and brochures and things of that nature about things like the cultural heritage of the area. The environmental resources that you are going to experience and what needs to be safeguarded to be good stewards when you are out on the river, good outdoor ethics. One of the things I think is basic is boating skills. We are seeing a tremendous growth of people who are getting out on the water, buying both at all sorts of stores, selling them, they may not be experienced boaters, having programs where you are teaching basic paddling skills, how to be safe on the water, those are really instrumental, we are looking at what are you doing in those areas. And a lot of similar things, what is deliberately being done to promote conservation stewardship. On that waterway itself. We are looking for areas that are safe to paddle in terms of water quality, is the water quality good enough for human contact, we have had outfits that have challenged that and we don't want to see your water trail on an EPA list. Just saying that. We also look for programming going on to do things like Riverbank or repairing an area of restoration, marsh restoration, maybe basic plant removal, how to build healthy fisheries, a lot of communities and partners pull together trash clean up events on the river. Those are great examples. Communities barge is another thing we look for and I really highlight this for areas where it may be a public agency that is applying and I really encourage them to look outside the agency and what the agency does for the river and look at how the community can support the river, that is the closest adjacent immunity for multiple communities. How are you getting them involved in the water trail? Community events is a great way providing opportunities for local people to take ownership and the resources close to them, take pride in the river, hosting cleanups, hosting paddling events. Maybe it is a distance event, timed distance event, raft race, something like that, getting people excited about it. Other things the community can do is cleanups, they can help build infrastructure. From either things like trailheads, campsites, access points themselves, those are opportunities for volunteers and that is one of the things is you are looking at the volunteer base, this helps build advocacy for your river. These all work together, this is why it is one of our best management practices because it really helps build a strong advocacy for water trails and water trail quality, river quality, lake quality, water quality in general. Public information is one of the areas that we work

closely with applicants on. We are free to work within our staff, we are happy to work with you all ahead of an application period to review what material we have but we want to make sure the water trail has water trail signage on it at every access point. That is a must and that is something we have had to work closely with to make sure it is in place. We also want to see signage about safety. We also want to see information posted on the Internet dedicated websites, webpages within another agency or organization umbrella. That should have critical information that people need about how to be safe on the river that day. Or the lake, whatever they are getting out onto. It should have information about maps, directions, somehow have apps, we have to think about it in terms of going to another state that you are not familiar with and go for a paddle, what information do you need to be safe on the water resource, water trail that day. Think of it from that audience perspective. You want to make sure you are messaging and reaching out to the people who are not familiar with the area. Things that affect Waterflow, like tides, tight schedules, that can be an example on an ocean system. More on a river-based system, stream pages that show is there enough water for you to have a delightful day on the river. What are those parameters to work within in terms of water levels that are going to be a safety for you on the water. The six best management practices and what we are looking at here, are there agreements in place such as an [Indiscernible], for long-term maintenance. Of the water trail. We have had an application recently where they stated the river took care of itself so there wasn't much to do. And that may be the case from a certain perspective but what we are looking for is a maintenance schedule. Going out and looking from the river perspective, getting on the boat and actually making sure there is not a logjam on the river, there is no big areas where there is trash building up. And there is a need for trash pickup. Are there any major maintenance needs at the access points that need to be addressed and how do you address those? Who is responsible for what, oftentimes if you have multiple access points they may not be owned by the same entity. Who is doing what on what access point and what are their responsibilities and where is that spelled out? We are looking at that closely. We also look at a adopt a site that are river based where you have people that agree to adopt a section of the river and go out and routinely paddle it to make sure it is free of debris, free of any hazards, there are no issues that need to be reported to maintenance. We also look and make sure the existing infrastructure is in good shape. That it's not failing, it is not in need of major maintenance. Keep that in mind. This last one, planning and management. I think about this as the partner and the applicant not just being a one person show. We have had some experience with applicants who have come in and had a strong passion for river, they paddled it numerous times, they want to see it promoted as a national water trail, it's the lifelong ambition. But they don't necessarily have the people behind them or the agreement of the land owners or agencies we are looking for robust organizations whether they are nonprofits, agencies that have a history to them that have a broad base of leadership and volunteers who are engaged in the process. What is the vision, what are the future conditions they desire for it to be and setting goals for the organizations and partners to obtain in the future. We really look at how that can be demonstrated through organizational structures, proof of support from various partners that are working together on the application. I want to provide some frequently asked questions. And go over those real quick. There is no minimum or maximum length for a national water trail. We only allow designations on sections of the

application that actually meet all seven best management practices. We are not just saying you can meet three and that's fine. You have to meet all seven. The maps provided in the application should be for the section you are applying for, not the entire Mississippi River. We need to be able to hone in on the waterway you are applying for, understand it better. If you are a national recreation trail, if you want to seek national water trail designation, you can. You have to go through the national water trail best management practices application process with us. And you can apply for changing that designation. Again, distance should be reasonable for a new peddler between access points. That depends on the water. Access points should be available to the general public and have suitable parking. Not to private ownership. If they are in private ownership there should be a written agreement providing public access and easement. Any time, any water can be designated, we want to make sure the quality is safe for public health reasons. And again we do not provide oversight of the trail or maintain the trail upon designation. That is up to the local entities applying. Some common issues. We have, sometimes they don't meet all the best management practices. Or the trail doesn't have signage in place, they are planning on it it's not done. We want it to be done and complete. We want maps complete, signage complete, online information complete. So once it is designated it is ready to be of aid to people planning a trip. We want to make sure safety hazards are identified. If you have dam structures for instance, those are one of the most notable things I can think of off the top of my head where if somebody needs to have information ahead of time, they will have to know they have to portage around and where to portage and there is signage before and on the portage itself so we will be looking for that. Again, if the applicant lacks the information about the public access point ownership and permissions similar to NRT, and the individual is applying rather than a proven organization, and sometimes we get a new entity form to apply for a national water trail designation and it doesn't have a long history so those are things that raises red flags, we want to look into more of the depth of the organization. I think that is the last slide for me. I am going to turn it over to Katie Johnson. Who is representing Texas. The newest national water trail. She is going to share a little bit about the water trail as well as some of the experience going through the process this last year. I will turn it over to you.

>> Great, Thank you. Hello, everyone, my name is Katie Johnson, the river operations specialist and I have been in this role for about a year and half. I am relatively new with the city. One of my first big projects as the river operations specialist was to apply for a national water trail designation. I am really excited to speak with you all today about the official water trail and our overall experience with applying. Thank you for driving my PowerPoint for me. Just a little bit about the Comal river, it is two and half miles long and runs within our city limits of the County. I am really happy there was not a minimum length requirement, we have dedicated 1 1/2 miles of the river to be the actual trails since there is a mix of public and private access it is almost entirely spring fed from the Edwards aquifer, the largest Springs system in Texas. With it being spring fed, the water stays really cool, 70-72 degrees year-round. We have four endangered species in the river, you can only find them in this one specific area. And to help protect the species and well-being of the river, and the aquifer we have a watershed protection plan and a habitat conservation plan. The river has been and still is part of the area and in the past it was

utilized by settlers to power water mills and cotton gins. It has been a place to hold town meetings and special events. And the river has been really the center point of our community for generations. Mostly, the river is most known for tubing. The river is known for being one of the best tubing rivers in Texas, floating the river is a very popular Texas pastime. Especially in the summer. In a non-drought year we can see up to 400,000 people visit the river, it is a big operation. Especially in the peak season. It takes a lot of work to manage. The city has a dedicated, full-time river management team that oversees operations year-round. We also have the Police Department and in addition, an influx of seasonal park rangers to help in the busy summer months. To help manage river activities and the sheer amount of people that visit, we have specific city ordinances in place that help maintain certain levels of order. And designated to help keep the river clean. Our disposable container ordinance is one of our most notable ordinances that states no disposable food or beverage containers are allowed on the water. We have an annual litter cleanup contract that does encourage litter removal. Is a huge investment overall and it takes the combined efforts of different departments within the city to keep things running smoothly. There are a few reasons why we wanted to apply. The river is a staple and with the work that we have put in as a full-time river management team and the projects we work on year-round we felt qualified and ready to jump in and apply. We were also encouraged by our peers, specifically from members of the river management Society, it was suggested we apply during the last symposium held. And the benefit of being able to connect with other water resource managers, share the river with people looking for recreation opportunities. Especially to those who are looking for activities to do during all seasons and not just summer. That was another benefit. The application process, Allison and Lizzie went over these so I will touch on them quickly. For us, the first step in the application process was to check off that we met the listed requirements. We made sure there were no gaps in the river, it was open to the public and following land-use and environmental laws. We reached out to our state trails administrator for his letter of support. And I am happy we did this early on because it gave him enough time to form a response. And if he had questions it gave us time to communicate back and forth. From there we started to collect letters of support from our city manager, our designated river advisory committee, Chamber of Commerce and residents as well. I think the most time-consuming part of the application process was filling out application. I think it is nice because the application is the webpage on the database, you can type everything in and see the layout as you go. I had a few meetings with my supervisor throughout the process. We went through the seven best management practices to see how it best supplied them, with us being a city we have different departments that I can quickly go over and talk to so I was able to talk to I.T. and GIS team, to help me create a map that created public entry and exit points. Then I worked on putting together photos and links to attach to the application as supporting documentation. And also throughout the application process since this was my first time, I am still relatively new, I ended up having questions and needed confirmation on things so I reached out to the program coordinator and they were really helpful with answering my questions. Besides communication with the program coordinator, another helpful resource was the application website in general. I felt like it explained the steps of the application process in a way that walked me through step-by-step. Something that is listed is a PDF document of the seven best management practices. It breaks

down each practice and lists questions you can apply to your trail. This gave me a guideline to follow when I felt lost and it gave us some ideas for the future, we could do to further enhance our trail. I was going to say, the American webinar trails, that series helped me, it helped me see what other trails were doing and gave me contacts if I had further questions. Once it was officially approved, we had challenges when applying. When I was typing up the information for the trail there were times when I thought I was typing too much. Like it would also be information overload but it was actually the opposite. After the first round of review they came back and asked for additional pictures of our trail signage. And had questions regarding safety and water quality. So I would definitely say if you are applying or thinking about applying, don't forget the review committee is made up of people that are all over the country who may have never heard of your trail or the town it is in. Include all the details and be so descriptive to give them the best overall picture of your trail. And another challenge we faced was the opinion of a few residents and some River outfitters. Some of the residents were concerned that having the designation would bring in a crowd disrespect the river and for outfitters there were a few that progress that the designation with more restrictions on how they ran their businesses. Ultimately, we have good working relationships with both and it was a matter of explaining what the designation means and what the outcome of being a national water trail would look like. For a river stigma to be frank, it had a party reputation for a long time it's tucked between metropolitan areas with a lot of universities, people, it was just seen as a fun place to live. And 10-15 years ago if you were to Google the river it would not be painted in a good light. It would look different from how it looks today. From that time the city has put in a lot of work to change the narrative. And between city staff and the community, the river is more of a family-oriented place. And is respected a lot more. And some state laws we have here in Texas, this goes in with the river stigma and questions we got back from the review committee. In Texas, tubing is one of our biggest recreation activities. It is not considered a water vessel like a paddleboard or kayak is. Lifejackets are not required. Since the state owns the river, as a city we don't have the power to force anyone to wear a life jacket, we can't ban alcohol from being on the river. To address this, safety is our top priority and something our staff is vocal about. We have safety signage, as well as a free lifejacket program that a lot of people take advantage of. And during the peak season with all the city staff, along the trail, we utilize verbal communication to ensure guest safety and enforce the city ordinances. Benefits we are hoping to see in the future include networking and training opportunities. In addition to being able to be a part of a bigger community of water resource managers. And the ability to learn from others. Since we are now in the same boat as 36 other national water trails. This designation could also help us get letters of support from fundraising and child protection efforts. And overall being a national water trail, continues to shed light upon, a positive light and recognizes the hard work the city and community has done to make it a great place. I think the designation shows we are committed to providing public access to the river for generations to come and I think we are the second national water trail now In Texas, that is an extra bonus for us for sure. I think that is all I had. I tried to stick within 10 minutes. Thank you so much for having me and letting me share about our water trail. If anyone has questions now or in the future, please feel free to reach out to me at any time.

>> Thank you so much, Katie, Allison, Andy and Lindsay. We will get into the live Q&A portion with little time we have left. We have a lot of great questions and a lot of questions have been typed in. I want to ask a question from Joe to Katie. Just because you have the experience. Do you have a rough idea of how long the application process took you to fill out? I know you said it took the longest, it could depend and might differ but in days or hours, an idea you could share?

>> Absolutely, it took us a few months. We were ambitious. We could have maybe pushed it to the following year to give us time. I am happy we did it because we were approved to be a national water trail. I think to give the committee enough detail and to put it together better edited or nicer, I would say give yourself I don't know, at least six months depending on where you are at and depending on what resources you have. With me being in a municipality, I have a lot of resources that I can reach out to easily. I would say probably six months, give yourself six months. Allison might have a different answer depending on what they see as a committee. It took us a few months. We were right at the deadline to get things turned in.

>> I often see at least six months is a good timeframe. Even up to a year. We often see people at this time of your thinking the application for national water trails is due on November 1st and it does take a longer period of time to prepare a quality application. Unless you have things buttoned up already, it is a robust process.

>> Thank you. I am doing some follow-up questions, and he answered some in regards to the Forest Service, we will see if you have an answer, Ken was asking is there renewal process or a designation to continue in perpetuity? Is there anything from the Department of Interior?

>> I will preface this with saying I am an acting, this will be the first November I see applicants come in. I am gathering as much information and if there are follow-up questions, please email me and I can better research those answers. As far as continued application process or renewal process, to my knowledge there is not. Once you are part of the national recreation trail system you are. You are a national recreation trail. We do want to go out and make sure the trail exists. Because the system is so robust with 1300 trails. Once you are there, you are good to go. I could address the tenure clock question. I think this segues into that. I think that might have come up from the trail eligibility side I showed. That slide said the trails existence and availability for 10 years, there are two components. The first is the trail is in existence. We want to make sure the trail is not an idea. Thinking this would be fantastic to have one day. We want to make sure it is there in existence. And the second part is the 10 years, that is less of a stringent rule or clock that is associated with it. And more of the understanding to what Allison talked about. We want to see best management practices and trail maintenance, we want to ensure someone doesn't oversee this trail for one year and leave it to be grown over and people aren't actually doing active trail maintenance. That is what the 10-year commitment is to this trail. To say we will manage this for at least 10 years, many more forever. That is where that comes from. In my

opinion or from my knowledge, there is not necessarily a clock that starts. Please, correct me if any of that is incorrect.

>> Thank you so much. Another question, clarification. A couple people actually ask this. Please explain and connect to a national trail system network. And he mentioned the Forest Service national recreation trails do not connect to NST or NHD. What is that for the national recreation trails?

>> That is a great question, I don't know if you have input on that specifically, Allison. I am still getting my feet under me. That segment is a segment to my knowledge that connects to a trail that is associated with the park. If you want to email me that I can further research and give you a full wrap of an entry. I think you are on mute, Allison.

>> I think we should research and make sure we are answering correctly.

>> Okay, Jared is asking are designations limited to nonmotorized trails or can motorized be considered? Not sure the best person to answer that.

>> Say again the question?

>> Can motorized trails be considered?

>> Yes. On both national and recreation.

>> Perfect, okay.

>> I want to answer that, to add-on It is roads and highways that are suitable for passenger cars that are not. If there is something that is an ATV or snowmobile, that is mechanized or motorized, that is acceptable.

>> We will do one more question before we end because we are at the top of the hour but it should be a quick question. Do we need to have or be a public space to apply for NRT status?

>> I think you mean by public space like it has to be free, the public, free and open, rather than charge a fee, I am almost certain in the Forest Service there are trails that have a fee associated with them. That are NRT's. I don't know how that would work with the Forest Service. But it is possible within the Forest Service.

>> Great. Of course, we have other questions we were not able to get to so I encourage anyone if you have questions you can follow up with American Trails, myself, I will sure the presenter emails. The names are hyperlinked in the resources that I do you see on the screen. I will be sharing with attendees within a couple days. Thank you so much for attending the webinar and

our webinar partners. I want to again thank our webinar partners that include, Washington's Evergreen Coast, Professional TrailBuilders Association, iZone Imaging, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, USDA Forest Service. If you are enjoying these webinars, please consider donating as little as \$5 by texting Im4Trails to 44-321. I will do a monthly drawing for those that donate today to win our TRAIL BOSS mug, coaster, and stickers! And if you become a sustaining monthly donation or donate \$50 or more one time, we will automatically send you a mug as a thank you! We hope you will join us for next week's webinar in our Advancing Trails Webinar Series where we will celebrate hosting over 250+ webinars. You can participate two ways. 1. Attend our September 5 webinar for your chance to win! 2. Donate to our giveaway to be promoted! Details available on our website. Email me with any questions. Thank you again to everyone for attending. I hope you enjoy the rest of your day and happy trails!