

# Chapter 1: Introduction

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The term “trail” means different things to different people, depending upon their expected use or means of locomotion. The federal Recreational Trails Program (RTP), authorized in 1991 in the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), and re-authorized in 1998 as part of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21, 23 U.S.C. 206), defines a recreational trail as a “thoroughfare or track across land or snow, used for recreational purposes such as: pedestrian activities, including wheelchair use; skating or skateboarding; equestrian activities, including carriage driving; non-motorized snow trail activities, including skiing; bicycling or use of other human-powered vehicles; aquatic or water activities; and motorized vehicular activities, including all-terrain vehicle riding, motorcycling, snowmobiling, use of off-road light trucks, or use of other off-road motorized vehicles.”

The Recreational Trails Program is designed to supplement and assist current federal, state, local and volunteer trail efforts in the provision and maintenance of recreational trails for motorized and non-motorized trail use. The program is intended to expand the quantity and improve the quality of recreational trails in America. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) administers the Recreational Trails Program at the federal level. At the state level, the program is managed through Nevada Division of State Parks (NDSP), a part of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR).

Recreational trails are important to Nevadans. Over 61% (967,419) of Nevada citizens participated in a trail activity in 2003. Recreational trails are used for everything from daily exercise to the “trip-of-a-lifetime,” but many people do not recognize the time and effort necessary to maintain trails. Recreational trails are perhaps the most important piece of public infrastructure necessary for the enjoyment of Nevada’s 56 million acres of federal and state lands, and perhaps the most taken for granted.

## **Legal Authority**

Recreational Trails Program legislation (23 U.S.C. 206) Section 206 (d) requires the State to have a recreational trail plan. Funds apportioned to the State by this act shall be obligated for recreational trails and related projects that are identified in, or further a specific goal of, a recreational trail plan. Each state is responsible for developing its own plans, laws, policies and administrative procedures to administer the Recreational Trails Program.

## **Goal and Objectives**

The purpose of this plan is to guide the distribution and expenditure of the funds from the federal Recreational Trails Program. This plan can also provide information and recommendations to guide Nevada Division of State Parks and other agencies in their management of trail resources.

The Nevada 2005 State Recreational Trails Plan has one goal and four objectives

**GOAL:** Increase and improve the quality of trail activity opportunities in Nevada

**OBJECTIVE 1:** Guide the allocation of Recreational Trails Program funds and other resources for appropriate trail uses and needs.

**OBJECTIVE 2:** Provide recommended actions to address the top priority trail activity issues in Nevada.

**OBJECTIVE 3:** Apply strategic planning principles in the conduct of research, with emphasis on support for the Nevada Division of State Parks.

**OBJECTIVE 4:** Encourage public and private cooperation and input in addressing the trail activity issues facing Nevada.

## **Planning Criteria**

The Nevada 2005 State Recreational Trails Plan is written primarily for recreation planners and land managers. Included in this document are characteristics of Nevada trail users and an inventory of Nevada Division of State Parks trails and Recreational Trails Program trail projects. The plan then describes the planning process, findings, recommendations and provides appendices of relevant information. With the information contained herein, the plan is intended to be used as an information resource as well as a planning tool to guide trail agencies for the next five years.

The preparation of this plan was financed in part through a planning grant from the National Park Service, Department of the Interior, under the provisions of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Act of 1964. All of the Nevada Division of State Parks' public programs and activities are operated free from discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion or handicap.