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Appendix B (Normative)

National Historic Trail (NHT) Corridor Concept

Federal Trail Data Standards

National Historic Trails (NHTs) differ from "regular" trails, which can generally be described, inventoried, and managed as one linear route. This is not usually the case with NHTs. To better understand the inventory and management of NHTs, it is helpful to consider each NHT as an unofficial, informal "corridor", rather than a single line on a map. Each "NHT corridor" is comprised of two and often three aspects:

> **NHT[1] Designated Route**: What and where is the congressionally designated NHT route and associated NHT heritage sites? [NHT[1] is identified for all NHTs.]
>
> **NHT[2] Heritage Resources:** What and where is the route and sites where history actually occurred? [NHT[2] occurs on all NHTs, although physical evidence and/or remnants may no longer be present. Location may be other than the congressionally designated route.]
>
> **NHT[3] Recreation and/or Interpretive Trail/Road/Sites:** Where/what is the route and associated sites that people can use (i.e. trail/road/site used for recreation or interpretation)? [May or may not be present. NHT[3] location may vary from the congressionally designated route and/or original, historically used route.]

To be effective, NHT administrators and managers rely on data representing two to three of these various components that can occur within an NHT corridor. It is important to note that "corridor" is used here as an unofficial descriptive concept and not intended to imply the existence of actual area boundaries.

The Federal NHT Data Standards Team recommends this concept be adopted and used internally to better communicate and explain the management and data needs related to NHTs.

National Historic Trail Condition Categories

The National Historic Trail (NHT) Condition Categories are Federal standard classifications designed to assess the comparative character of visible trail remnants observed at the time of mapping for all NHTs. National Historic Trail Condition Categories are applicable to the heritage resource component of the NHT and not to the recreation or interpretive components. NHT Condition Categories do not reflect the character or integrity of the NHT setting or surrounding landscape.

The six NHT Condition Categories include:

NHT Condition Category	Title/Descriptor
NHT I	Location Verified, Evident, and Unaltered
NHT II	Location Verified and Evident with Minor Alteration
NHT III	Location Verified with Little Remaining Evidence
NHT IV	Location Verified and Permanently Altered
NHT V	Location Approximate or Not Verified
NHT VI	Location Verified with Historic Reconstruction

Because NHTs are designated for historic events spanning more than two centuries, NHT segments are classified based on their condition at the time of documentation, compared to their condition at the time of historic significance – be that undeveloped route, trail, primitive road, or surfaced transportation route.

The NHT Condition Categories reflect broad standardized categories that can generally be applied to all NHTs, and will be used to communicate condition status among all NHTs. Since the character of each NHT differs, however, the NHT Condition Categories may be further refined to reflect specific NHTs if needed and appropriate. Any such trail-specific refinements or sub-categories must still fall within the general logic and generally equate to the national NHT Condition Categories, and should be clearly documented with examples.

NHT Condition Categories Encompass:

1. Documentation of the historic location; and
2. Presence (or lack) of visible trail remnants and/or artifacts that provide evidence of the historic route.

Reference Terminology:

Archaeological Evidence: Physical manifestations (e.g. artifacts and features) of historical use or events related to the significant period of trail use.

Condition: A descriptor of the current trail appearance, including the look and feel of the trail, in comparison to the probable appearance of the trail during its period of significant historic use. In other words, to what degree does the trail still look like it did during its period of maximum historic importance?

Location Verification: The combination of written records (e.g. journals or letters), cartographic information, terrain limitations, visible trail remnants, and artifacts used to precisely locate a land or water based historic route. Location verification is an important part of the definition of condition categories.

Historic Reconstruction: The deliberate re-creation or simulation of an NHT segment based on the accurate duplication of historic location, features, and materials. Historic reconstruction re-creates the original appearance of the NHT segment.

Routes, Braids and Swales:

Route(s): Well-defined major variants of a historic trail. Most historic trails have various routes. They may be caused by divergent starting and destination points; changes in water, feed, and weather conditions; or the simple human desire to find a better, faster, and easier route. Routes are generally well defined, will be mapped at all scales, and should be reported to the Federal level for all historic trails. An example of routes for the California National Historic Trail are the Independence Road and St. Joe Road routes, which begin in different cities on the Missouri River and come together in Marysville, Kansas.

Braid: Routes frequently divide into braids. Trail braiding occurred when travelers found different routes around obstacles. One braid may go north of a butte and another south. At creek and river crossings braids spread out to find the best ford. If one braid was wet and marshy, a new braid was formed on higher, drier ground. Braids generally run more-or-less parallel to one another and are usually within a couple of miles of one another. Most braids are well known and are mapped at most scales. Whenever possible braids should be reported at the Federal level.

Swale: If trail data is recorded at the on-the-ground/GPS level, a third type of trail becomes visible. Physical evidence of the passage of historic travelers on the ground is often still visible. There may be many parallel swales running very close to one another. There are locations where 10-15 separate swales run parallel up a single ridge. Multiple swales occurred because travelers didn't like to eat

one another's dust and would spread out whenever possible and also because old swales were often deeply rutted and muddy, making travel easier a few feet away. Although agencies may be documenting these swales at the GPS level of accuracy and detail, this information should not be reported at the Federal level.

Trace: A term normally associated with wagon and horse trails, that reflects visible, on-the-ground evidence of the travel along the route.

Visible Trail Remnant: The readily visible, remaining physical evidence of a trail or route that was established or made significant by historic use. For example trail trace, ruts, swales, rust marks, bridges, blazes, retaining wall, sidewalk, etc. Visible trail remnants do not include associated archaeological sites or features that are not directly part of the trail.

NHT Condition Category Definitions

Each NHT Condition Category is defined below, along with brief examples intended to illustrate the underlying logic of each category and to assist with the application of the categories to individual National Historic Trails.

NHT I: **Location Verified, Evident and Unaltered**

Description: The trail route is accurately located and verified from written and cartographic records, terrain limitations, and/or archaeological evidence.

The visible trail remnant retains the essence of its original character that relates to the historic period for which the trail was designated and shows no evidence of having been either impacted by subsequent uses or altered by other improvements.

For example, in the case of wagon trails, there is visible evidence of the original trail in the form of depressions, ruts, swales, tracks, or other scars, including vegetative differences and hand-placed rock alignments along the trailside. In the case of more contemporary historic trails, evidence may include constructed road features, sidewalks, railroad grades, etc. if significant to the historic events for which the trail was designated.

NHT II: **Documented and Evident with Minor Alteration**

Description: The trail route is accurately located and verified from written and cartographic records, terrain limitations, and/or archaeological evidence.

The visible trail remnant retains the essence of its character that relates to the historic period for which the trail was designated, but shows minor evidence of alteration by subsequent use, development, or natural events.

For example, in the case of wagon roads, there is little or no evidence of having been altered permanently by more modern road improvements, such as widening, blading, grading, crowning, or graveling. In forested areas, the trail may have been used for logging but still retains elements of its original character during the significant historic period.

NHT III: **Documented with Little Remaining Evidence**

Description: The trail route is accurately located and verified from written and cartographic records, terrain limitations, and/or some archaeological evidence.

Due to weathering, erosion, vegetative succession, development, etc., trail traces are insignificant, although some evidence remains (e.g. wagon wheel impact evidence such as rust, grooved, or polished rocks).

For example, this category includes trail segments that once passed through forests and meadows, across excessively hard surfaces or bedrock (such as on ridges), over alkali flats and sandy soils, through ravines or washes, or other environments not conducive to trace preservation.

NHT IV: Documented and Permanently Altered

Description: The trail route's location is verified from written and cartographic records, or by terrain limitations, although little or no archaeological evidence remains.

The trail has been permanently altered or obliterated by human-caused or natural events, leaving no evidence of its original appearance.

For example, the original trail may have been permanently altered by road construction through widening, blading, grading, etc. Other above or below-ground developments include pipeline installation, utility corridor development, building construction, etc.

NHT V: Approximate Trail

Description: The trail route's location cannot be accurately verified from written or cartographic records, or archaeological evidence.

The trail is either so obliterated or unverifiable that its location is only approximately known.

In many cases, the trail has been destroyed entirely by development, such as highways, structures, agriculture, or utility corridors. In others, it has been inundated beneath reservoirs. In some, there is not enough historical or topographic evidence by which to locate the trail accurately.

NHT VI Historic Reconstruction

Description: The trail route is accurately located and verified from written and cartographic records, terrain limitations, and/or archaeological evidence.

The trail segment has been deliberately reconstructed, at its original location, to appear as it did during the period of maximum historic importance.

For example, the reconstruction of a tow path or lock along an historic canal to simulate trail's original character and use.

Note: Reconstructed trail segments or associated features, not in the original location do not meet the definition of NHT VI Historic Reconstruction, and are considered as recreation, interpretive or other developments.

NHT Condition Categories: Comparison Summary and Classification Tree

The tables below provide summarized comparisons of the NHT Condition Categories and are intended for general comparative purposes only. Refer to the specific NHT Condition Category definitions and, if applicable, the supplemental discussion when attempting to assign the Condition Categories to a particular NHT.

NHT Condition Category Comparison Summary

NHT Characteristics	NHT Condition Categories					
	NHT I	NHT II	NHT III	NHT IV	NHT V	NHT VI
Location Verified	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Historic Reconstruction	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Trail Remnant Visible and Unaltered	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Trail Remnant Visible and Altered	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
Trail Remnant Not Visible, but Archaeological Evidence Visible	No	No	Yes	No	No	No

NHT Condition Category Classification Tree

NHT Condition Categories: Classification Tree To classify an NHT trail segment, ask the following questions in order shown:					
1.	Is location verified?	if	**No**	then segment is:	**NHT V**
2.	Is location verified and historic reconstruction present?	if	**Yes**	then segment is:	**NHT VI**
3.	Is location verified, but the trail tread is permanently altered?	if	**Yes**	then segment is:	**NHT IV**
4.	Is location verified and original physical trail remnant visible and unaltered?	if	**Yes**	then segment is:	**NHT I**
5	Is location verified and original physical trail remnant visible, but altered?	if	**Yes**	then segment is:	**NHT II**
6	All remaining segments are:				**NHT III**

Application of NHT Condition Categories: Supplemental Discussion

This section provides additional examples and discussion to assist with the application of NHT Condition Categories to some common and/or potentially problematic situations. The examples provided below are not comprehensive and should be further refined as needed to reflect specific National Historic Trails, while remaining within the general context of the standardized NHT Condition Categories.

No trail categorization scheme can cover all situations with equal uniformity. In most situations, applicability of one of the six NHT Condition Categories is fairly straight-forward. Inevitably, however, there will be situations where more than one category might apply. In such cases, where there is no clear determination, the trail classifier will have to make a subjective decision based on a thorough observation and assessment to determine which NHT Condition Category best fits the NHT trail or NHT trail segment.

Origin of the Categories

The NHT Condition Categories were inspired by the Oregon-California Trails Association (OCTA) "Mapping Emigrant Trails" (OCTA 2002:13-15). The OCTA categories were devised for the emigrant trails across the western United States to describe, in particular, wagon and livestock trails. When developing NHT Condition Categories for Federal use, the OCTA categories were used as a starting point and were revised to be more broadly applicable to all NHTs, using the logic of trail location and trail appearance today relative to appearance during the period of the trail's use.

Relationship to National Register of Historic Places

The NHT Condition Categories do not incorporate the National Register of Historic Places concepts of integrity, or even significance. These National Register concepts are derived through analysis and consideration of the context of an historic resource. The NHT Condition Categories, by contrast, are *descriptive*. Specifically, "setting", as defined in the National Register of Historic Places, is not a consideration in assessing NHT condition: NHT Condition Categories describe the comparative condition of the route actually traveled and not the condition of the overall landscape in which the route currently exists.

The National Register concept of associative qualities is not incorporated into the condition categories. The associative qualities of an NHT are already incorporated into its designation and management.

Eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places is not part of NHT condition categories because the condition categories are independent of the National Register criteria. For instance, a trail segment may not be significant but still be in NHT I

Condition Category; another trail segment may be significant due to its association with some important event but be in NHT IV.

Effects of Modern Intrusions and Changes Around the NHT

Modern intrusions, such as freeways, power lines, or buildings situated near trails normally do not affect trail categorization, because the NHT Condition Categories describe the route's surface, not the landscape in which the NHT segment lies presently. Only the presence (or absence) of visible trail remnants, archaeological evidence, and/or knowledge of the trail's location affect categorization.

Logging, forest fires, or vegetation changes since the period of the NHT's maximum importance may have altered the trail corridor temporarily. However, over time, new growth has, or will have, restored the natural condition of the trail corridor. As long as the trail route is accurately known and the trail itself has not been physically altered, there will be no effect upon the Condition Category.

Often, the physical remains of a long NHT trail segment will be intermittently indistinct during certain conditions (e.g., in different seasons). In these cases, determining an appropriate NHT Condition Category requires multiple observations of the trail segment.

Application of NHT Condition Categories: Examples

Wagon and Livestock Trails

NHT I: Most emigrant trails still retaining evidence of original wagon use – in the form of ruts, swales, scaring, or tracks – probably have undergone later 19th century wagon use due to freighting, mining, stage, or ranching activity. Therefore, rarely will visible trail remains be the result solely of emigrant wagon use. Also because these wagon trails have had little or no use in the 20th century, either erosion or restoration have often changed their appearance where they no longer look like they did during use by the emigrants. Nonetheless, these trail segments still retain their emigrant wagon-use character and qualify as NHT I.

NHT II: Many times, historic wagon roads have continued to be used as *unimproved* roads since their period of historic importance. In these cases, even though the historic road is overlain by an unimproved two-track road, it still retains the essence of its historic appearance and is an NHT II Condition Category trail.

Occasionally, a superimposed, two-track road will have been abandoned and the NHT will have reverted in appearance to an "unaltered trail." However, if through research of historic documents, oral histories, or soil conditions, it can be demonstrated that the trail was once used as a road for motor vehicles, then it is classified as a NHT II Condition Category. Agency documentation for the trail segment should note that the segment is an abandoned road that spuriously seems "unaltered trail."

NHT III: Trails passing over soils and surfaces that did not easily take the imprint of a wagon wheel, or where erosion and other subsequent changes have obliterated the original trail tread, may still retain some evidence of the passage of emigrant wagons. Rust marks, grooves, and polish on rocks; rope burns on trees; and hub scrapes on rocks or trees allow verification of emigrant wagon travel even in areas where the trail tread itself may no longer be evident. The trail may also be verified in these areas by terrain limitations or archaeological evidence. Sections of trail that can be verified from these limited remains, but where no visible trail remnant remains should be classified as NHT III.

NHT IV: The trail condition has been permanently altered by subsequent development. Where *improved* roads, such as crowned and ditched roads, have been built over historic trails, the historic appearance is no longer retained and the trail Condition Category is NHT IV.

NHT V: In most cases, NHT V trails have been so obliterated by development that exact trail locations are impossible to determine. However, there will be situations where additional research and field verification may reveal the exact location of a trail segment which presently is known only approximately. Thus where trail location has not been determined due to insufficient research and field verification, a trail corridor should be protected from disturbance until it has been confirmed that physical or other evidence of a trail segment no longer exists.

NHT VI: NHT VI seldom exists for wagon and livestock trails. In rare cases trail tread may be reestablished in an area where the original trail has been completely obliterated. This reconstruction is usually done for interpretive purposes. For example: the pavement was removed from a section of the abandoned county road at Whitman Mission NHS and the trail returned to a more 19th century appearance.

"Urban" Trails

Examples of NHT Condition Categories applied to trails that originally occurred along roadways, sidewalks, railroads, or other developed travel ways:

NHT I: The NHT will have a Condition Category of NHT I if, for example, the original sidewalks that were used historically are unaltered in design, materials, construction method, and appearance along the original, verified, historical route. So, the concrete sidewalks of a block along a historic trail would be NHT I if they had been replaced with similar concrete slabs of the same dimensions and appearance.

NHT II: The NHT will have a Condition Category of NHT II if, for example, the original sidewalks that were used historically have been altered in design, materials, construction, method, but still retain much of their historical appearance along the original, verified, historical route. So, the concrete sidewalks of a block along a

historic trail would be NHT II if they had been replaced with asphalt sidewalks of similar dimensions, replaced with somewhat larger poured slabs, or modified in places by cut-ins for driveway ramps or wheeled vehicles. Another example of an NHT II condition class is a block with much of its original sidewalk still similar in appearance to its period of historic significance but with minor areas of very different sidewalk.

NHT III: The NHT will have a Condition Category of NHT III if, for example, the original sidewalks that were used historically are substantially altered in appearance as well as design, materials, and construction but one can still tell that it was the originally used location and one could still traverse the trail in a similar way. So, the concrete sidewalks of a block along a historic trail would be NHT III if the sidewalks were rebuilt completely with different materials, or very different dimensions, or of very different materials (e.g., paving stones instead of cement slabs). Another NHT III condition is a stretch of former sidewalk that has now decayed to rubble, or on which the paving slabs have been wholly removed.

NHT IV: The NHT will have a Condition Category of NHT IV if, for example, the original sidewalks that were used have been paved over by conversion of a street to a highway and removal of all sidewalk. So, the concrete sidewalks of a block along a historic trail would be NHT IV if they were covered over by buildings, parking areas, roadways, or in some other way obliterated, yet the original location of the trail is known.

NHT V: The NHT will have a Condition Category of NHT V if, for example, the original location of the trail cannot be verified. For example, the trail is known to have occurred from Point A to Point B, but no exact location for the route traversed is known.

NHT VI: The NHT will have a Condition Category of NHT VI if, for example, the trail has been completely replicated by reconstruction intended to restore the trail to a facsimile of its original appearance. Or, for instance, a bridge that was once present, but has then been removed and replaced with a new bridge designed to appear the same as the historic bridge.

Snow Trails

Examples of NHT Condition Categories applied to trails that originally occurred across snow, ice, or water:

[Note: Field assessment of snow and water routes often necessitates observation during periods when snow and ice are not covering the ground.]