

## Background and Instructions for First CDNST Semi-Annual Report

### **Background**

During the fall of 2003, Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management (ASLM) Rebecca Watson expressed strong interest in the BLM increasing its commitment to completing the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail. This interest was spawned by the Continental Divide Trail Alliance (CDTA) which has set its sights on completing the Trail by 2008.

*Issues.* Several segments of the CDNST on or near BLM-managed lands (as well as other Federal or State agency lands) are not complete. In addition to funding and staffing, reasons for this lack of ‘completion’ of the Trail include (1) an unclear optimal trail route (2) legal access issues on or to the Trail, (3) concerns with segments located on motorized routes, and (4) issues with trail construction, maintenance and operations and other factors. The order of importance of these 4 issues varies by location.

*Process.* In order to define what completion of the Trail means and to assess the potential for accomplishing the completion goal, we need to determine the state of the Trail on and near BLM lands, including (1) how much of the Trail is in place for reasonable use by the public on BLM lands, (2) what segments or alternate routing are needed to link BLM lands together or with other parcels, where BLM may have a role to play, and, (3) to identify the motorized/non-motorized portions of the Trail and construction and maintenance needs. The Attachment 2 questionnaire is designed to help elicit this information.

The BLM has discussed with USFS the possibility of doing an “optimal location review.” The BLM has also contacted the NPS to secure the services of the NPS lands acquisition team, targeting primarily New Mexico. Work of this kind has taken place along the Appalachian Trail and is underway for the Pacific Crest Trail. In light of these initial talks, the attached questionnaire focuses on BLM using the ‘best available route’ to meet completion of the CDNST by 2008, but factors in potential ‘optimal route’ considerations, to determine if routing changes should be considered.

Over the next few months, the USFS CDNST Trail Administrator, Greg Warren, will lead an effort to review plans, examine the optimal location (short and long-term), determine strategic milestones and prioritize work, under the umbrella of a strategic plan. The BLM will participate in these meetings to better coordinate our efforts with the USFS and the other participating entities.

**Instructions** Each Field Office/Unit shall provide the following information to the State Office; each State Office shall package and provide the information to WO-172 by 12-15-03. Please utilize the Facility Asset Management System or Recreation Management Information System as needed, following any established segmentation protocol as necessary.

1. Questionnaire/Report. Complete the attached questionnaire (Attachment 2) for each segment of the CDNST where BLM has or may have trail responsibility, along the best available routing being used. The WO will compile all questionnaires and briefing papers into a trail-wide report. The questionnaire addresses all miles of the Trail on and near BLM, by segment, miles motorized and non-motorized by prescription, needed and existing acres/miles of trail easements/acquisitions and responsible party, miles of trail actively maintained/not maintained, planning or NEPA documentation needed and other factors. Cost estimates for acquisitions, easements, etc., will be compiled by the Washington Office for consistency.

2. Briefing paper.

- a) Each Field Office/Unit- Prepare a briefing paper, from the Field Office/Unit Manager to the State Director, summarizing and attaching the questionnaire findings and briefly addressing accomplishments and best estimates of needs and costs for planning, NEPA, staffing, and support.
- b) Each State Office- Prepare a briefing paper to the BLM Director from the State Director, through the NLCS Director, summarizing the State-wide findings of the Field Offices/Units, and briefly addressing accomplishments and best estimates of needs and costs for planning, NEPA, staffing and support.
- c) Washington Office- Prepare a briefing paper to the Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management from the Director of the National Landscape Conservation System, through the BLM Director, summarizing the Trail-wide findings, accomplishments, staffing needs and reports. Prepare briefings for Director and Assistant Secretary.

Note: Primary State Office National Scenic Trail Contacts: Email a copy of all briefing papers and questionnaires (Field and State) to deb\_salt@blm.gov for compilation in the Assistant Secretary's report by December 15, 2003.

3. Wyoming State Office - Position Analysis Report.

As the lead State for the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (IM- 2002-147) please prepare a CDNST position management and analysis report and summary briefing paper, from the State Director, through the NLCS Director to the BLM Director, for a CDNST Trail Liaison Position. Reference IM 2002-147 for role responsibilities to describe function of Trail Liaison. Please consider an array of reasonable alternatives which incorporate grade, time, travel, operations and additional positions needed to provide such a function. Email a copy to deb\_salt@blm.gov no later than December 15, 2003.

## **Definitions for Questionnaire**

‘Best available route’ is the trail routing BLM pursues (or uses) in RMPs or RMP amendments or other decision documents, in consultation with agencies BLM makes a connection with within a segment. This may not be the long-term “optimal” trail route, but helps ensure reasonable public use within the next 5 years.

‘BLM Segment’ means a continuous part of the trail on BLM lands or BLM CDNST trail easements most logically broken into a management unit for the Field Office or Field Unit for the purposes of trail management. The segment must end when a break in ownership is encountered, where the trail is, or would, cross private or other lands. Use any FAMS or RMIS protocols for segmentation or data as appropriate.

‘Non-BLM Segment’ means continuous private lands and other lands (State, Federal, other jurisdiction), where an easement/acquisition is needed, which directly connects to BLM trail lands or where BLM should play a role. These miles should be their own segment. This applies to checkerboard or hop-scotch lands as well. Use any FAMS or RMIS protocols for segmentation or data as appropriate.

Please file any pertinent research information related to your response so it can be referenced in the future. Please complete each form electronically, rather by hand, so that it can easily be transmitted.