



**FOREST SERVICE MANUAL  
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS (WO)  
WASHINGTON, DC**

**FSM 2300 – RECREATION, WILDERNESS, AND RELATED  
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

**CHAPTER 2350 – TRAIL, RIVER, AND SIMILAR RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES**

**Amendment No.:** 2300-2008-3

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**Approved:** CHARLES L. MYERS  
Associate Deputy Chief, NFS

**Date Approved:** 09/30/2008

**Posting Instructions:** Amendments are numbered consecutively by title and calendar year. Post by document; remove the entire document and replace it with this amendment. Retain this transmittal as the first page(s) of this document. The last amendment to this title was 2300-2008-2 to 2300\_contents.

<b>New Document</b>	2350	78 Pages
<b>Superseded Document(s) by Issuance Number and Effective Date</b>	2350 (Amendment 2300-2006-3, 5/22/2006)	76 Pages

**Digest:**

Notice of issuance of this directive was published in the Federal Register on October 16, 2008 (73 FR 61600).

Several technical corrections have been made to this chapter to be consistent with the Travel Management Rule, 36 CFR Part 212, Subpart B.

Modifies and clarifies introductory paragraph. Adds bicycling to list of activities.

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**Digest--Continued:**

2352.1-2352.4 - Removes codes, captions, and direction for this section and reserves 2352.

2353.01b - Revises paragraph 1 to make it consistent with the Travel Management Rule.

2353.01c - Adds new paragraph regarding Forest Service Outdoor Recreation Accessibility Guidelines (FSORAG). Modifies, clarifies, and renumbers the paragraph regarding Forest Service Trail Accessibility Guidelines (FSTAG).

2353.03 - Modifies and clarifies paragraph 1 and paragraph 7 of Policy.

2353.04d - Modifies and clarifies responsibilities for the Director of Recreation, Heritage, and Volunteer Resources.

2353.04f - Modifies paragraph 5, Regional Foresters Designated Lead for National Scenic and Historic Trails, and adds Northern Region National Historic Trails.

2353.04g - Adds application of Trail Fundamentals to responsibilities of Forest Supervisors.

2353.04h - Adds section for District Rangers to approve Trail Management Objectives (TMOs).

2353.05 - Adds definitions for “bicycle,” “Design Parameters,” “Designed Use,” “difficulty level,” “forest trail,” “four-wheel drive vehicle greater than 50 inches in width,” “Managed Use,” “motorcycle,” “National Quality Standards for Trails,” “snowmobile,” “Trail Class,” “Trail Fundamentals,” “Trail Management Objective,” and “Trail Type.” Modifies and clarifies the definitions for “difficulty level,” “National Forest System trail,” “trail,” “trailhead,” and “wheelchair or mobility device.” Removes the definition for “four-wheel drive way,” “less than standard maintenance,” “standard maintenance,” and “trail vehicle.”

2353.12 - Changes caption from “Documentation” to “Trail Management Objectives (TMOs),” and recodes Trail Objectives section 2352.19 to 2353.12.

2353.13 - Revises caption from “Marking” to “Trail Fundamentals,” and sets out direction.

2353.14 - Changes caption from “Inventory Record” to “Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS),” and revises direction.

2353.15 - Changes caption from “Establishment of Management Priorities” to “National Quality Standards for Trails,” and adds direction.

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**Digest--Continued:**

2353.16 - Changes caption, and recodes to this section direction previously set out at 2353.23.

2353.17 - Changes caption, recodes to this section direction previously set out at 2353.27, and clarifies direction on accessibility.

2353.18 - Changes caption, and recodes to this section direction regarding cooperative and volunteer relationships previously set out at 2353.16.

2353.19 - Removes code and caption and direction on trail objectives.

2353.2 - Changes caption form “Types of Trails” to “Trail Management,” and sets out direction.

2353.21 - Revises caption from “Difficulty Levels” to “Trail Inventory,” and recodes direction previously set out at 2353.14.

2353.22 - Revises caption from “Recreation Opportunity Spectrum” to “Documentation,” and recodes direction previously set out at 2353.12 to 2353.22.

2353.23 - Revises caption from “Rights-of-Way Protection” to “Marking,” and recodes direction previously set out at 2353.13 to 2353.23.

2353.24 - Revises caption from “Preconstruction and Construction” to “Establishment of Management Priorities,” and recodes direction previously set out at 2353.15 to 2353.24.

2353.25 - Revises caption from “Maintenance of Trail Use” to “Development, Reconstruction, and Maintenance,” and recodes direction previously set out at 2353.17 to 2353.25.

2353.29 - Establishes new code and caption. Revises and recodes direction on difficulty levels previously set out at 2353.21 to 2353.29.

2353.31 - Removes four-wheel-drive ways from paragraph 2.

2353.33a, paragraph 4 - Adds TMOs to reports.

2353.35 - Revises and clarifies paragraph 2 regarding management of National Recreation Trails.

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**Digest--Continued:**

2354.04b - Corrects the title for the Washington Office, Director of Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers.

2355.05 - Removes definitions for “all-terrain vehicle,” “four-wheel drive way,” “road,” “snowmobile,” and “trail vehicle.”

2353.42 - Modifies and clarifies policy on National Scenic and National Historic Trails.

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Trail, river, and similar recreation opportunities occur over broad expanses of land or water in natural settings and accommodate recreational activities that involve relatively low-density use and limited infrastructure. These activities include hiking, caving, rock climbing, mountaineering, over-snow vehicle use, cross-country skiing, horseback riding, bicycling, off-highway vehicle use, driving for pleasure, boating, hunting, and fishing.

### **2350.2 - Objectives**

1. Provide recreation opportunities for users of the general forest, water, and cave resources.
2. Provide opportunities for a variety of recreation pursuits with emphasis on activities that are in harmony with the natural environment and consistent with the recreation role of the National Forest.
3. Mitigate adverse impacts of users on the natural resources, cultural and historical resources, and on other users.

### **2350.3 - Policy**

1. Manage the general forest, water, and underground areas with their recreational access and support facilities under the principles defined in FSM 2303.
2. Emphasize opportunities, in all Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) classes, that require minimal supporting facilities for the convenience of users, more self-reliance by the users, and less intrusion by constructed facilities upon the natural environment.
3. Coordinate management of trail, river, and similar recreation opportunities with recreation sites and facilities so as to provide adjunct opportunities for users of these sites. Such sites and facilities include campgrounds, picnic areas, ski areas, resorts, and, as appropriate, recreation developments on other ownerships.
4. Coordinate management of trail, river, and similar recreation opportunities with other resource management activities to take advantage of supportive relationships to the extent possible.
5. Regulate users only to the extent necessary to provide for user safety; to protect the natural, cultural, and historical resources; and to achieve the recreation experience objectives.
6. Emphasize user assistance (for example, low-impact use) in management and provide user information accordingly.

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**2352 - ROAD RECREATION MANAGEMENT [RESERVED]**

**2353 - NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM TRAILS**

**2353.01 - Authority**

**2353.01a - Laws**

The principal laws for the administration of a National Forest System trail are:

1. National Trails System Act (82 Stat. 919, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 1241 (Note), 1241-1249). The act establishes a National Trail System containing national recreation, scenic, historic, and connecting or side trails for the purpose of providing trail recreation opportunities. It prescribes administrative and development matters and encourages the use of volunteers in the trail program. It also establishes provisions for agreements to carry out the purposes of the act.
2. National Forest Roads and Trails Act (78 Stat. 1089, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 532-538). The act recognizes that construction and maintenance of an adequate system of roads and trails within and near the National Forest is essential to meeting the increasing demands for timber, recreation, and other uses. It authorizes and establishes procedures related to right-of-ways, easements, construction, record keeping, and agreements.
3. Surface Transportation Assistance Act of 1978, as amended (23 U.S.C. 101a, 201-204; P.L. 95-599). The act establishes criteria for forest highways and defines forest roads and forest development roads and trails.
4. ERFO Funds. Funds authorized by the Federal Highway Administration under the Emergency Relief for Federally Owned Roads (ERFO) program (23 U.S.C. 125). These funds are available for repair of federally owned roads and trails damaged or destroyed by natural disasters or by catastrophic failures.

**2353.01b - Regulations**

The principal regulations for the administration of a National Forest System trail are:

1. Travel Management (36 CFR Part 212, Subparts A, B, and C). Subpart A establishes requirements for administration of the forest transportation system, including roads, trails, and airfields, and contains provisions for acquisition of rights-of-way. Subpart B describes the requirements for designating roads, trails, and areas for motor vehicle use and for identifying designated roads, trails, and areas on a motor vehicle use map (MVUM). Subpart C provides for regulation of use by over-snow vehicles on NFS roads, on NFS trails, and in areas on NFS lands

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2. Prohibitions (36 CFR 261). The regulation establishes prohibitions necessary to manage and control use on a National Forest System trail. It includes general prohibitions and prohibitions in areas designated by order.

**2353.01c - Federal and Agency Requirements for Accessibility of Trails**

For related direction on the authorities for the accessibility of recreation programs, sites, and facilities, see FSM 2330.12.

1. Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) of 1968, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4151 *et seq.*). This act requires that all facilities designed, constructed, altered, or leased by a Federal agency be accessible to persons with disabilities.
2. Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Standards (41 CFR Part 102-76, Subpart C). These guidelines were issued by the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (Access Board) in 2004 and apply to buildings and facilities subject to the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 and adopted on November 8, 2005, by the General Services Administration (GSA) as accessibility standards to be used by the Federal agencies operating under the authority of GSA.
3. Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, Sections 504 and 508 (29 U.S.C. 794 and 794d). Section 504 of this act (29 U.S.C. 794) prohibits Federal agencies and recipients of Federal financial assistance from discriminating against any person with a disability. Section 508 of this act (29 U.S.C. 794d) requires that all electronic and information technology purchased or developed by a Federal agency allow persons with disabilities to have access to and use of the information and data that is comparable to that provided to persons without disabilities.
4. Enforcement of Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability in Programs or Activities of USDA (7 CFR parts 15e and 15b). The USDA regulations implementing section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act as it applies to programs and activities conducted by USDA are found at 7 CFR part 15e. The USDA regulations implementing section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act as it applies to USDA-assisted programs are found at 7 CFR part 15b. These provisions address program accessibility; requirements for accessible programs in new, altered, or existing facilities; accessibility transition planning; accessible communication requirements; and compliance procedures.
5. Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) (42 U.S.C. 12101 *et seq.*). This act prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability by State or local governments, public accommodations, and public transportation. The ADA does not apply to Federal agencies, with the exception of Title V, section 507c. This provision clarifies that the Wilderness Act of 1964 is preeminent in federally designated wilderness areas, contains a definition of a wheelchair, and states that a device that meets that definition can be used wherever foot travel is permitted in federally designated wilderness areas (FSM 2353.05).

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6. Forest Service Outdoor Recreation Accessibility Guidelines (FSORAG). The FSORAG applies to recreation sites within the National Forest System boundaries that are not addressed in Federal accessibility guidelines or standards or when the FSORAG sets a standard for those programs, sites or facilities that is equal to or higher than that established by the Federal accessibility guidelines or standards. The FSORAG is available electronically at <http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/accessibility>. Copies of the FSTAG may also be obtained by writing to the Accessibility Program Manager, Recreation and Heritage Resources Staff, Washington Office

7. Forest Service Trail Accessibility Guidelines (FSTAG). The FSTAG applies to new or altered trails within National Forest System boundaries that are not addressed in federal accessibility guidelines or standards or when the FSTAG sets a standard for those programs, sites or facilities that is equal to or higher than that established by federal accessibility guidelines or standards. The FSTAG is available electronically at <http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/accessibility>. Copies of the FSTAG may also be obtained by writing to the Accessibility Program Manager, Recreation and Heritage Resources Staff, Washington Office.

### **2353.02 - Objectives**

1. Provide trail-related recreation opportunities that serve public needs and meet land management and recreation policy objectives.
2. Provide trail recreation opportunities that emphasize the natural setting of the National Forest and are consistent with land capability.
3. Provide trail access for National Forest management and protection.

### **2353.03 - Policy**

1. Manage National Forest System (NFS) trails to achieve the Trail Management Objectives (TMOs) identified for each trail (FSM 2353.12).
2. Provide a diversity of trail opportunities for experiencing a variety of environments and modes of travel consistent with the National Forest Recreation role (FSM 2302 and 2303) and land capability.
3. Designate the more outstanding and qualified trails or network of trails as components of the National Trail System.
4. Emphasize long-term cost effectiveness and need when developing or rehabilitating trail facilities.
5. Where needed, provide trail access for resource management and protection.

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6. Inventory and include all National Forest System trails in the Forest Development Transportation System Plan.
7. Ensure that all new or altered trails with a Designed Use of Hiker/Pedestrian that connect directly to a trailhead or currently accessible trail comply with applicable federal accessibility guidelines and standards for trails and the Forest Service Trail Accessibility Guidelines (FSTAG) (FSM 2353.01c, para. 7).

**2353.04 - Responsibility**

**2353.04a - Secretary of Agriculture**

The Secretary of Agriculture has delegated all actions prescribed by the National Trails System Act to the Chief in accordance with Title 7, Code of Federal Regulations, section 2.60(a)(1) and (7), except:

1. Appointment of a chairperson and members to the advisory council for a particular National Scenic or National Historic Trail.
2. Designation of the Department's representative on the advisory council for a National Scenic or National Historic Trail administered by another agency.

**2353.04b - Chief**

The Chief has the responsibility to:

1. Recommend to the Secretary National Scenic and National Historic Study Trails for inclusion in the National Trail System.
2. Approve and submit National Scenic and National Historic Trail management plans to Congress.
3. When in the public interest enter into agreement with the Secretary of the Interior pursuant to provisions in section 7 of the National Trails Act transferring management responsibilities for segments of National Scenic or Historic Trails.
4. Approve the rights-of-way for National Scenic and Historic Trails and sign notices for the Federal Register of the availability of maps and descriptions.
5. Recommend major National Scenic and Historic Trail relocations to Congress for action.

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**2353.04c - Deputy Chief, National Forest System**

The Deputy Chief, National Forest System, has the responsibility to:

1. Assign Forest Service leadership for National Scenic or Historic Trail studies conducted by the Forest Service or the Secretary of the Interior.
2. Consult with the Secretary of the Interior on matters related to the National Trail System.

**2353.04d - Washington Office, Director, Recreation, Heritage and Volunteer Resources**

The Washington Office, Director, Recreation, Heritage and Volunteer Resources has the responsibility to:

1. Provide leadership for planning, development, and management of National Forest System trails, which includes activities associated with National Trail System.
2. Recommend program and budget direction to include trail planning, construction, reconstruction, improvement, maintenance, and operation.
3. Coordinate with national representatives of user groups, other agencies, and Members of Congress, and prepare memorandums of understanding and cooperative agreements when necessary.
4. Provide leadership for development and management of a trail information system capable of providing data to managers and the public.
5. Prepare regulations relating to development and operation of National Forest System trails.
6. Keep the Secretary of the Interior informed of National Recreation, side, and connector trails designated on the National Forests.

**2353.04e - Washington Office, Director, Engineering**

The Washington Office Director, Engineering, has the responsibility to:

1. Provide engineering technical expertise to the Director of Recreation on matters relating to recreation activities on the Forest Development Transportation System.

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2. Provide leadership to Regions on engineering problems related to National Forest System trails and road recreation management.
3. Provide leadership in developing equipment and methods for construction and maintenance of trails.

**2353.04f - Regional Foresters**

Regional Foresters have the responsibility to:

1. National Forest System Trails. Approve a trail system as a component of the Forest Plan.
2. National Recreation Trails.
  - a. Designate National Recreation Trails occurring on National Forest lands.
  - b. As appropriate, designate National Recreation Trails on non-National Forest lands with the consent of cooperating Federal agencies, States, their political subdivisions, other administrating agencies, or private landowners.
3. National Scenic and Historic Trails.
  - a. For trails under the administration of Secretary of the Interior: Participate in the study, development, and operation of National Scenic and Historic Trails administered by the Secretary of the Interior where such trails cross National Forest System land.
  - b. For trails under the administration of the Secretary of Agriculture:
    - (1) Recommend organizations and individuals to be represented on the advisory council and provide administrative support to the council.
    - (2) Approve trail locations in consultation with the advisory council, State and Federal agencies, other Regions of the Forest Service, and other interested parties.
    - (3) Prepare a trail management plan in consultation with the advisory council and other interested parties. Submit the plan to the Chief for approval.
    - (4) Encourage States, counties, or private organizations to construct, maintain, and manage those portions of the trail located on non-Federal land and outside the exterior boundaries of National Forests.



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- (5) When in the public interest, enter into written cooperative agreements with States or their political subdivisions, landowners, private organizations, or individuals to operate, develop, and maintain any part of a National Scenic or Historic Trail.
- (6) Approve minor relocations of National Scenic and Historic Trails and publish required notices in the Federal Register.
- c. For studies: Conduct studies authorized by the National Trails System Act to determine the feasibility and desirability of designating trails as National Scenic or National Historic Trails. Where such studies involve more than one region, the region with the most mileage on National Forest will normally be designated the lead region.
4. Connecting and Side Trails. Designate connecting and side trails as components of National Recreation, National Scenic Trails, or Historic Trail as appropriate under Section 6 of the National Trails System Act.
5. Regional Foresters Designated Lead for National Scenic and Historic Trails. Regional Foresters for the following Regions are designated as the lead Forest Service official for coordinating matters concerning the study, planning, and operation of the indicated multiregional trails:
- a. Southern Region: Appalachian National Scenic Trail and Florida National Scenic Trail.
  - b. Rocky Mountain Region: Continental Divide National Scenic Trail.
  - c. Pacific Southwest Region: Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail.
  - d. Northern Region: Nez Perce National Historic Trail and Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail

**2353.04g - Forest Supervisors**

Forest supervisors have the responsibility to:

1. Develop, operate, and maintain National Forest System trails.
2. Apply the Trail Fundamentals and National Quality Standards for Trails in accordance with FSM 2353.13 and 2353.15 for planning, management, and operation of National Forest System trails.
3. Maintain the Forest Transportation Atlas (FSM 7710) with its trail component consisting of the Infra Trails data base and trail system map(s).

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4. Ensure the availability of technical engineering support for management of the trail system by the recreation function.
5. Prepare National Recreation, Connector, and Side Trail Establishment Reports.

### **2353.04h - District Rangers**

District Rangers are responsible for approving TMOs (FSM 2353.12), unless that responsibility has been reserved by the Forest Supervisor.

### **2353.05 - Definitions**

All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV). A type of off-highway vehicle that travels on three or more low-pressure tires; has handle-bar steering; is less than or equal to 50 inches in width; and has a seat designed to be straddled by the operator.

Bicycle. A pedal-driven, human-powered device with two wheels attached to a frame, one behind the other.

Design Parameters. Technical guidelines for the survey, design, construction, maintenance, and assessment of a trail, based on its Designed Use and Trail Class.

Designed Use. The Managed Use of a trail that requires the most demanding design, construction, and maintenance parameters and that determines which design, construction, and maintenance parameters will apply to a trail.

Difficulty Level. The degree of challenge a trail presents to an average user's physical ability and skill, based on trail condition and route location factors such as alignment, steepness of grades, gain and loss of elevation, and amount and kind of natural barriers that must be crossed, and which may temporarily change due to weather.

- a. Easiest. A trail requiring limited physical ability and skill to travel.
- b. More Difficult. A trail requiring some physical ability and skill to travel.
- c. Most Difficult. A trail requiring a high degree of physical ability and skill to travel.

Forest Trail. A trail wholly or partly within or adjacent to and serving the National Forest System that the Forest Service determines is necessary for the protection, administration, and utilization of the National Forest System and the use and development of its resources (36 CFR 212.1).

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Four-Wheel Drive Vehicle Greater Than 50 Inches in Width. An off-highway vehicle greater than 50 inches in width that operates on four wheels and with a drive train that allows all four wheels to receive power from the engine simultaneously.

Managed Use. A mode of travel that is actively managed and appropriate on a trail, based on its design and management.

Motorcycle. A two-wheeled motor vehicle on which the wheels are situated in a line, rather than side by side.

Motor Vehicle. Any vehicle which is self-propelled, other than:

- a. A vehicle operated on rails; and
- b. Any wheelchair or mobility device, including one that is battery-powered, that is designed solely for use by a mobility-impaired person for locomotion, and that is suitable for use in an indoor pedestrian area (36 CFR 212.1).

National Forest System Trail. A forest trail, other than a trail which has been authorized by a legally documented right-of-way held by a state, county, or other local public road authority (36 CFR 212.1).

National Quality Standards for Trails. National criteria that establish the level of quality in terms of health and cleanliness, resource setting, safety and security, responsiveness, and condition of facilities for National Forest System trails managed at a full-service level.

National Trails System Components. The following components of the National Trails System: National Recreation Trails, National Scenic Trails, National Historic Trails, and Connecting and Side Trails (National Trail System Act, sec. 4 and 5).

Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV). Any motor vehicle designed for or capable of cross-country travel on or immediately over land, water, sand, snow, ice, marsh, swampland, or other natural terrain (36 CFR 212.1).

Snowmobile. An over-snow vehicle that operates on a track, uses one or more skis for steering and has handle-bar steering and a seat designed to be straddled by the operator.

Trail. A route 50 inches or less in width or a route over 50 inches wide that is identified and managed as a trail (36 CFR 212.1).

Trail Class. The prescribed scale of development for a trail, representing its intended design and management standards.

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Trail Fundamentals. The five concepts that are the cornerstones of Forest Service trail management, including Trail Type, Trail Class, Managed Use, Designed Use, and Design Parameters.

Trail Management Objective (TMOs). Documentation of the intended purpose and management of a National Forest System trail based on management direction, including access objectives.

Trail Type. A category that reflects the predominant trail surface and general modes of travel accommodated by a trail.

- a. Standard Terra Trail. A trail that has a surface consisting predominantly of the ground and that is designed and managed to accommodate use on that surface.
- b. Snow Trail. A trail that has a surface consisting predominantly of snow or ice and that is designed and managed to accommodate use on that surface.
- c. Water Trail. A trail that has a surface consisting predominantly of water (but may include land-based portages) and that is designed and managed to accommodate use on that surface.

Trailhead. The transfer point between a trail and a road, water body, or airfield, which may have developments that facilitate transfer from one mode of transportation to another.

For purposes of the FSTAG (FSM 2353.27), a trailhead is a site designed and developed to provide staging for trail use and does not include:

- a. Junctions between trails where there is no other access.
- b. Intersections where a trail crosses a road or users have developed an access point, but no improvements have been provided beyond minimal signage for public safety.

Wheelchair or Mobility Device. A device, including one that is battery-powered, that is designed solely for use by a mobility-impaired person for locomotion, that is suitable for use in an indoor pedestrian area, and that may be used by a person whose disability requires its use anywhere that foot travel is permitted (Title V, sec. 507c, of the Americans With Disabilities Act and 36 CFR 212.1).

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## **2353.06 - References**

Comply with the direction in FSH 2309.18, Trails Management Handbook, and the references cited in FSH 2309.18, section 06 to manage a trails program.

## **2353.1 - National Forest System Trails Administration**

### **2353.11 - Relationship Between National Forest System Trails and the National Trail System**

Manage designated National Trails as a component of National Forest System trails.

### **2353.12 - Trail Management Objectives (TMOs)**

Manage each trail to meet the TMOs identified for that trail, based on applicable land management plan direction, travel management decisions, trail-specific decisions, and other related direction, and based on management priorities and available resources. For each NFS trail or NFS trail segment, identify and document its TMOs, including the five Trail Fundamentals, Recreation Opportunity Spectrum classifications, design criteria, travel management strategies, and maintenance criteria.

### **2353.13 - Trail Fundamentals**

Identify the five Trail Fundamentals for each NFS trail or trail segment based on applicable land management plan direction, travel management decisions, trail-specific decisions, and other related direction. Each Trail Fundamental is addressed in FSH 2309.18, section 14.

### **2353.14 - Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS)**

Use the ROS in trail development and operation (FSM 2310 and FSH 2309.18, Trails Management Handbook, chapter 10).

### **2353.15 - National Quality Standards for Trails**

Apply the National Quality Standards for Trails in the planning, construction, maintenance, condition assessment, and management of NFS trails, in accordance with FSH 2309.18, section 15.

### **2353.16 - Right-of-Way Protection**

Use cooperative agreements or acquisition authorities to provide reasonable protection to designated trails and their corridor (National Trails System Act of October 2, 1968 (16 U.S.C. 1241 (note), sec.7, and FSM 5400).

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### **2353.17 - Accessibility**

Ensure all new or altered trails with a Designed Use of Hiker/Pedestrian that connect directly to a trailhead or currently accessible trail comply with Federal and Forest Service accessibility guidelines and standards (FSM 2353.01c, para.1-6). The FSTAG applies to trails when it establishes an equal or higher standard for those trails than Federal accessibility standards (FSM 2353.01c, para.2). The FSTAG is available electronically at <http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/accessibility>.

### **2353.18 - Cooperative and Volunteer Relationships**

Consult with and develop cooperative working relationships with other Federal, State, and local political subdivisions, organizations, and private individuals on matters concerning National Forest System trails. Wherever appropriate, assist volunteers and volunteer organizations in planning, developing, and maintaining trails (National Trails System Act of October 2, 1968 (16 U.S.C. 1241 (note), sec. 11).

### **2353.2 - Trail Management**

#### **2353.21 - Trail Inventory**

Inventory all NFS trails, and record the inventory in the Infra Trails Module.

#### **2353.22 - Documentation**

Document all National Forest System trails in the Forest Transportation Atlas (see FSM 7711).

Identify National Forest System trails on a map of suitable scale and make it available to the public at offices of the Forest Supervisor, District Ranger, and cooperators.

#### **2353.23 - Marking**

Mark National Forest System trails with appropriate signs that reasonably bring the trail location to the attention of the public.

#### **2353.24 - Establishment of Management Priorities**

See FSH 2309.18, Trails Management Handbook, chapter 10, for direction on establishment of management priorities.

#### **2353.25 - Development, Reconstruction, and Maintenance**

Follow the direction in FSH 2309.18, Trails Management Handbook, chapters 10 and 20, when developing, reconstructing, or maintaining trails.

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### **2353.26 - Preconstruction and Construction**

Comply with the Standard Specifications for Construction of Trails, EM-7720-102, where appropriate for trail construction.

### **2353.27 - Management of Trail Use**

See FSH 2309.18, Trails Management Handbook, chapter 40, for direction on management of trail use.

### **2353.28 - Maintenance Management Process**

Consider the maintenance management process described in chapter 40 of the FSH 2309.18, Trail Management Handbook, when developing trail maintenance procedures.

### **2353.29 - Difficulty Levels**

1. For trails with a Designed Use of Hiker/Pedestrian, refer to the direction on signs in section 7.3.10 of the FSTAG.
2. For other trail uses, as deemed appropriate based on Trail Class, Managed Use, Designed Use, and other management considerations, difficulty levels may be used to communicate to trail users what to expect when using a trail and to broaden their recreation experience by introducing various degrees of challenge.
3. If difficulty levels are used, their symbols may be displayed on maps, brochures, and signs (see FSH 2309.18, ch. 20).
4. If a difficulty level is assigned to a trail, specify the Managed Use or Designed Use to which the difficulty level applies (see FSH 2309.18, ch. 20). Specification of the use to which the difficulty level applies is particularly important on trails where more than one use occurs.

## **2353.3 - National Recreation Trail Administration**

### **2353.31 - Policy**

1. New designations should emphasize a trail network concept where possible. Designate interconnecting trails as National Recreation Trails where a number of interconnecting trails meet the designation criteria.
2. Motorized trails may be designated as National Recreation Trails.

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3. Do not consider trails within the National Wilderness Preservation System for designation. Trails with only a short segment in a wilderness may be designated as a National Recreation Trail.
4. The Regional Forester may establish National Recreation Trails on National Forest System lands or on other ownerships with the written consent of other Federal agencies, the States, their political subdivisions, other appropriate administering agencies, or private owners.

**2353.32 - National Recreation Trails**

Regional foresters shall designate National Recreation Trails (FSM 2353.04) as provided in sections 4 and 6 of the National Trails System Act. These trails must:

1. Represent the more outstanding trail opportunities of National Forest System trails.
2. Provide a day-use or extended trail experience for a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities reasonably accessible to population centers.
3. Emphasize designation of an interconnecting network of National Trails.

**2353.33 - National Recreation Trail Designation Process**

**2353.33a - Reports**

Prepare and submit an establishment report to the Regional Forester.

The report must include the following information:

1. Approval page.
2. Name and location of proposed trail, including map indicating trail and vicinity, when appropriate.
3. History of the trail.
4. Description of the trail, its TMOs, and its environment, including cultural resources.
5. Management direction covering such items as protection, safety, maintenance, rules and regulations, signing, and associated recreation facilities.
6. Assessment of impacts on the trail and associated resources as a result of designation.
7. A statement that the trail or trail system will be available for public use and enjoyment for at least 10 consecutive years.



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### **2353.33b - National Recreation Trail Designation Criteria**

A trail or a network of trails must meet the following criteria to be designated as a National Recreation Trail.

1. Readiness. Designate a trail only if it is in place and available for public use.
2. Use and Availability. The trail must provide a variety of trail-related recreation opportunities within approximately 2 hours of automobile travel time from the population centers of the Region under consideration.
3. Length. The length of a proposed National Recreation Trail may vary, depending upon its use and purpose, but it must be continuous.
4. Location. The trail incorporates the significant natural and cultural features of the area through which it passes. The trail may utilize a variety of locations if the location is in accordance with planned trail use and reasonably provides for public safety.

### **2353.33c - Establishment Reports for National Recreation, Connecting, and Side Trails**

Submit one copy of the designation report to the Washington Office and appropriate copies to cooperators.

### **2353.34 - National Recreation Trail System Development**

#### **2353.34a - Design**

Follow the direction on trail design in chapter 2 of FSH 2309.18, Trails Management Handbook.

### **2353.35 - Management of National Recreation Trails**

1. Other Uses for National Recreation Trails. The primary purpose of a National Recreation Trail is for outdoor recreation use. Permit other uses such as power transmission, livestock drives, and logging-road operations that do not conflict with the nature and long-term purpose of the trail. Ensure that special visual management considerations are incorporated into the execution of such uses.
2. TMOs. Manage use of National Recreation Trails in keeping with their TMOs and the management objectives for the surrounding NFS lands. Where a segment of one of these trails traverses a wilderness area, manage that segment so that the segment and its associated uses are compatible with wilderness objectives.

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3. Removal of a National Recreation Trail Designation. Occasionally the need to remove a National Recreation Trail designation may arise. When it is not possible to relocate the trail and otherwise preserve the designated status, the Regional Forester may approve the removal of the designation from the trail. Submit copies of the report removing the designation to the Washington Office, Director, Recreation, Heritage, and Wilderness Resources and cooperators involved in the initial designation (FSM 2353.33c).

Existing designated trails that predate the establishment of a Wilderness Area may remain but should be considered for removal from the National Recreation Trail Classification at the expiration of their tenth year of existence. (See Establishment Report Statement concerning 10 years of availability at FSM 2353.33a.)

#### **2353.4 - National Scenic and Historic Trail Administration**

##### **2353.41 - Objective**

Develop and administer National Scenic or National Historic Trails to ensure retention of the outdoor recreation experience for which the trail was established and continued production of maximum benefits from the land.

##### **2353.42 - Policy**

1. Administer National Scenic and National Historic Trail corridors to be compatible with the purpose of the corresponding trail.
2. National Scenic Trails shall not be designated for use by motor vehicles, except as provided in enabling legislation. National Historic Trails may be designated for motor vehicle use if the designation is made when the trail is established as a National Historic Trail and motor vehicle use will not substantially interfere with the nature and purposes of the trail.

##### **2353.43 - National Scenic and Historic Trail System Development**

National Scenic or Historic Study Trails and Trails are established by an act of Congress.

##### **2353.43a - Designation**

1. Conduct studies of congressionally authorized study trails in the manner prescribed by section 5(b) of the National Trails System Act. Trail studies by the Forest Service must also comply with National Environmental Policy Act (FSM 1950) and the principles of land and resource management planning (FSM 1920).
2. Transmit studies to the President for consideration and submission to Congress.

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### **2353.43b - Administration**

1. Establish an advisory council within 1 year of the designation of any National Scenic or Historic Trail, and in the manner prescribed by section 5(d) of the National Trails System Act.
2. Where it is in the public interest, transfer management responsibilities between the Department of Agriculture and the Department of the Interior by a joint memorandum of agreement containing appropriate terms and conditions. Develop, operate, and maintain the transferred trail segment subject to the laws, rules, and regulations of the receiving department (National Trails System Act, sec. 7).
3. Within 2 fiscal years of establishment of a National Scenic or Historic Trail, and after consulting with affected Federal agencies, States, and that trail's advisory council, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a comprehensive trail management plan. The plan shall comply with section 5(f) of the National Trails System Act.

### **2353.43c - National Scenic or Historic Trail Relocation**

Relocation of a segment of a National Scenic or Historic Trail is permissible for reasons of preserving the purposes for which the trail was established or to promote sound multiple use management. Such relocation requires the consent of the agency head having jurisdiction over the land. Specific relocation criteria and procedures are found in the management plan for the trail. Publish notice of relocation in the Federal Register. Significant relocations require an act of Congress.

### **2353.44 - Management of National Scenic and Historic Trails**

Motorized use on a scenic trail is generally prohibited (National Trails Systems Act, sec. 7). However, regulation may be established that permits motorized use as necessary to meet emergencies or enable access by adjacent landowners (National Trails System Act, sec. 7).

Manage a National Scenic or National Historic Trail within wilderness so the trail and its associated use are compatible with the wilderness management.

### **2353.5 - Connecting and Side Trail Administration**

#### **2353.51 - Development of Connecting and Side Trails**

Designate connecting or side trails as provided in Section 6 of the National Trails System Act. Follow the process for designation of National Recreation Trails. These trails complement National Recreation, Scenic, or Historic Trails by providing additional public access or additional trails-related recreational opportunities. Manage these trails in accordance with the direction for the trail they complement.