

Northwest Arkansas Heritage Trail Plan

“A regional network of bicycle and pedestrian facilities that connects Northwest Arkansas citizens and visitors to our rich heritage, our recreational and cultural assets, a healthier lifestyle, and to each other.”



The Northwest Arkansas Heritage Trail Plan is part of the 2035 Regional Long Range Transportation Plan.

The 2035 Regional Long Range Transportation Plan was prepared by the Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission in cooperation with the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department and the Federal Highway Administration.

The 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan was adopted by a unanimous vote of the Northwest Arkansas Transportation Study (NARTS) Policy Committee on April 7, 2011.

Version II of the NWA Heritage Trail Plan was in the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan, adopted by a unanimous vote of the Northwest Arkansas Transportation Study (NARTS) Policy Committee on April 20, 2006.

Version I of the NWA Heritage Trail Plan was adopted as Amendment Five to the 2025 Regional Transportation Plan for NW Arkansas by a unanimous vote of the NARTS Policy Committee on October 28, 2002.

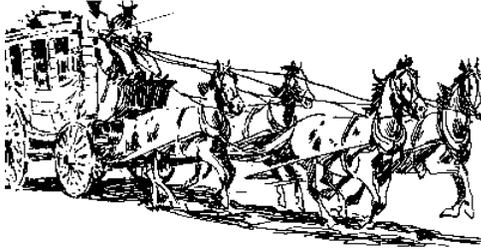
The NARTS Policy Committee consists of the highest elected official of each jurisdiction in the NARTS area or their appointed representative.



Historic Background and Significance of the Regional Routes

Trail of Tears

The term “Trail of Tears” signifies the various routes used for the forced removal of five civilized Native American Indian tribes from their homelands in the east, to the Indian Territory, today’s eastern Oklahoma. The removal took place from 1837 to 1839. Eleven of the Cherokee removal parties traveled through Northwest Arkansas on the “State Road” that ran from Springfield to Fort Smith through Fayetteville. The road followed the general route of what would later be called the Telegraph Road, entering the state just north of the Pea Ridge Park and tracking southwest toward Fayetteville. These parties turned west, some in the Bentonville area, and some in the Springdale/Fayetteville area toward their final destination of Tahlequah, Oklahoma. One party entered NW Arkansas in the Hindsville area, and travelled through south Fayetteville and Cane Hill. Another party came up from the Fort Smith area and entered Indian Territory near Evansville. Based on the diaries of party leaders we know some of the specific dates and camp locations of the traveling Cherokees. The Richard Taylor contingent camped at the Elk Horn Tavern site in today’s Pea Ridge Military Park on March 18, 1839. Then according to a party leader’s diary: “Traveled 15 miles to Cross Hollows, ate dinner at Homeslys, and came on 5 miles to Fitzgerald’s”. On March 21, 1839, the diary entry records “Thursday 21, cloudy and cool, passed through Fayetteville...got a mean meal at the Brick Tavern”



Butterfield Stage Coach Route

In 1858 John Butterfield began operating the longest stagecoach run in the history of the world. Butterfield's mail coaches ran from Tipton, Missouri to San Francisco, right through Northwest Arkansas. The mileage of the route was approximately 2,800 miles. Coaches were to run each way twice a week. Having 25 days to make each run, the coaches traveled day and night to meet this deadline. There were stage stops every 20 miles or so to change teams. The first westbound Butterfield Stage stopped at Callaghan's Station in present day Rogers on September 18, 1858, a Saturday morning. It then ran south through Cross Hollows on the way to Fitzgerald's Station in modern day Springdale (then Shiloh). The stage arrived in Fayetteville at 11:00 a.m. that Saturday morning and left at 10 minutes till noon on the way south toward the rugged Boston Mountains on the way to Van Buren and Fort Smith. Of the route from Fayetteville to Fort Smith it was said by one of the first riders, "I might say the road was steep, rugged, jagged, rough, and mountainous and then wish for more impressive words". This first westbound stage arrived in San Francisco on October 10, 1858, one day ahead of schedule. The Butterfield Stagecoach ran from 1858 till 1861.



Civil War Troop Movements

The Battle of Pea Ridge

On February 13, 1862 the Missouri State Guard under General Price retreated from Springfield, Missouri due to an unexpected winter campaign initiated by General Curtis of the Union Army. In the midst of fierce winter storms, 8000 Confederate troops with an almost endless wagon train trudged down the Telegraph Road to join their rebel counterparts in Arkansas. The Union Army gave a relentless pursuit resulting in the first Civil War battle in Arkansas on February 17, 1862 at Little Sugar Creek on the Telegraph Road. The Confederate troops finally made it to Cross Hollows for their first night's rest since leaving Springfield. The Arkansas Confederate commander at Camp Cross

Hollows, General McCulloch, advised a further retreat to the Boston Mountains near Strickler in southern Washington County. Here they were joined by General Van Dorn's troops from Van Buren and amassed an army of approximately 16,000 men, the largest concentration of Confederate troops west of the Mississippi. The Union Army of the Southwest, which consisted of approximately 10,500 men, had settled into a defensive position along Little Sugar Creek and McKissick Creek in northern Benton County. Van Dorn ordered his men to move against the Union Army on March 4th, 1862. Van Dorn's army, along with its massive supply train, marched up the Telegraph Road to Fayetteville and then up the Elm Springs Road to Bentonville amidst another fierce winter storm. Some of the cold, weary, Confederate troops fell out along the way but most continued on to meet their fate at one of the largest Civil War battles west of the Mississippi, the Battle of Pea Ridge.

The Battle of Prairie Grove

Following the Battle of Pea Ridge the two armies that fought there moved east, essentially abandoning Arkansas. Two new armies were organized, the Confederate Trans-Mississippi Army under General Thomas C. Hindman and the Union Army of the Frontier under General John M. Schofield. By the fall of 1862 the Confederates were concentrated in the Fort Smith area while the Union Army was split in two with half of it on Flint Creek at what is now Siloam Springs, Arkansas and the other half at Springfield, Missouri.

In November of 1862, Confederate cavalry was foraging around Cane Hill, Arkansas. General Blunt moved his troops down the Military Road/Line Road that connected Fort Scott, Kansas and Fort Smith, Arkansas. At Cincinnati he turned east to Rhea's Mill and then south to Cane Hill where he attacked the rebel cavalry. After the battle, Blunt decided to stay in Cane Hill. On December 1 the entire Confederate army, about 12,000 men began crossing the Arkansas River and December 3 they began moving north on Telegraph Road and then Cove Creek Road, hoping to destroy Blunt's 5,000 Union troops at Cane Hill. When Blunt learned of the Confederate advance he sent a telegraph to General Francis J. Herron, the Union commander in Springfield. In one of the great marches of the Civil War, Herron's troops marched south on Telegraph Road, covering about 130 miles in three and a half days. On December 6, 1862, the two armies clashed at Prairie Grove on the Fayetteville-Cane Hill Road in the last major battle to occur in northwest Arkansas.

The routes associated with these historic events make up the primary network of the Northwest Arkansas Heritage Trail Plan.

Plan Overview:

Washington and Benton Counties offer a unique opportunity for recreational and non-automotive travel throughout the area. Our region includes national forests, state parks, recreational areas, cultural assets, and significant historic sites.

The NWA Heritage Trail Plan is a part of a regional network of bicycle and pedestrian facilities that connects NW Arkansas citizens and visitors to our rich heritage, our recreational and cultural assets, a healthier lifestyle, and to each other.

By implementing a region-wide network of bike and pedestrian facilities, the public has access to healthy and safe alternatives to automotive travel. This system also provides opportunities to experience the historic and natural environments of the area. As a result, the overall quality of life, economy, and health of the region is being enhanced.

Travel by bicycle and walking are becoming increasingly important to American lifestyles. Facilities to encourage these activities must be attractive, user friendly, and safe.

Scope:

This plan is a part of a regional network for proposed bicycle and pedestrian facilities within the two counties of Northwest Arkansas. The entire network can be seen, at a minimum, as a bicycle route with improvements, providing safety for bicyclists. Within the more populated areas, where pedestrian traffic is anticipated, the improvements also accommodate safe pedestrian travel. This regional system is designed to connect the emerging master trail plans of the region's cities. By tying into the regional and local trails plans, the NWA Heritage Trail Plan provides linkage to recreational sites, parks, historic sites, museums, schools, work centers and retail shopping.

The entire regional trail network is an extensive system that includes off road and with road bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The Heritage Trail Plan is primarily a with road component of the regional system that utilizes historic road in the area. It can also be promoted as an auto tour and is in fact a component of a larger statewide Heritage Trail. The research of historic routes is ongoing. As routes are added or altered by the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism or the National Park Service, these changes will be reflected on the NWA Heritage Trail Plan.

Goals:

- Develop a regional network of bicycle and pedestrian facilities utilizing historic roads and linking to the full regional trail plan.
- Create travel and recreational opportunities by providing access to the region's attractions.
- Enhance economic development opportunities through the promotion of heritage-based tourism.
- Promote awareness among local residents of the region's abundant resources for recreational, historic, and cultural interests.
- Promote the health benefits associated with outdoor activities.
- Work with local jurisdictions and AHTD to promote discussion of new public funding sources to support the development and continuing maintenance of the regional trail network.

Objectives:

- Improve existing facilities to make them more accessible, usable, and enjoyable
 - Improve maintenance
 - Promote volunteerism
 - Clear, concise and unified signage
- Develop new facilities to provide safe travel for bicycles and pedestrians.
 - Link to existing trails
 - Create loop trails
 - Provide connections between communities, parks, and other key destinations.
 - Establish desired design guidelines for access, safety, and enjoyment
- Ensure that individual trail plans and the NWA Heritage Trail Plan are consistent with each other.
- Promote shared use of resources by using public lands in the best manner possible
 - Shared transportation corridors
 - Multiple-use paths
 - Facilities within existing public right-of-way
- Provide bicycle and pedestrian access to scenic vistas, historic sites, and points of interest.
- Provide for viewing stations, rest areas, turnouts, and interpretative signs.
- Build public awareness and support for bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
 - Proper road signs
 - Create descriptive brochures
 - Posting maps and trailhead bulletin boards
 - Publishing individual route guides
 - Planning promotional events
- Pursue federal, state and private grants and resources to assist local jurisdictions in implementing the plan.
 - Grants-in-aid project
 - Federal transportation bill

- Donations/trail sponsors
- Adopt-a-trail programs and volunteer workday
- Incorporate bicycle and pedestrian routes into regional tourism marketing and promotion.
 - Chambers of Commerce
 - Trade shows
 - Convention and visitors bureaus
 - Museums and schools
- Promote safety and education programs for bicyclists, pedestrians, and motorists

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facility Cross Sections:

There is not a single cross section that fits all the needs of the NWA Heritage Trail Plan. Currently, parts of the Plan range from unpaved county roads to major arterials in central commercial districts. Also, many of the jurisdictions will be developing their own master trail plan and the Heritage Trail Plan should work in conjunction with the cities' own plans. In considering cross sections, it is good to remember the purpose of the Plan, which is to facilitate bicycle and pedestrian traffic in the safest and most user-friendly way possible. Also, any transportation improvement that utilizes federal money must meet ASHTO guidelines.

On-Road Bicycle Facilities:

- Bicycle lanes on streets with curbs should be at least 5 feet in width
- On rural roads with no curbs, an 8 foot shoulder makes an ideal bike route and also serves the needs of motorists with mechanical problems to pull completely off the road
- On rural roads where an 8 foot shoulder is not possible a 5 foot shoulder should be the minimum considered for bicycle safety

Pedestrian Facilities:

- Sidewalks should be at least 6 foot wide.

Multiuse Facilities: (parallel to the roadway or off road)

- A multiuse facility shared by bicycles and pedestrians should be at least 10 feet wide.

Special Case Accommodation for Bicycles:

- When a multi-use facility parallels a road, or when ROW problems make a 5 foot bike lane impossible, accommodation should still be made for bicycles in the road

way. A minimum consideration for bicycle safety is to have a road width where a motorist can safely pass a bicycle without having to cross into the on-coming traffic lane. This Plan specifically recommends at least a 14 foot outside lane for minimum bicycle safety.

How to Use This Plan:

1. As a Guide for Trail Planning and Development:

This plan shows the historic connections necessary for connectivity between the individual trail plans of the region's cities.

2. As Justification For Funding Requests:

Administrators of grant-in-aid programs, foundations, philanthropic organizations and other funding sources look favorably on projects that are part of a published and adopted regional plan. Cities and trail advocacy groups should therefore use the plan as they seek support and assistance in their trail development and improvement efforts.

Northwest Arkansas Heritage Trail Plan

Points of Interest Along The Route

Butterfield Stage Coach Stops

Callaghan's Station, Rogers
Fitzgerald's Station, Springdale
Old Courthouse, Fayetteville
Parks Station, south of Hogeeye

Trail of Tears Sites

Elkhorn Tavern
Cross Hollows
Springdale Marker
Fayetteville Marker

Civil War Sites

Pea Ridge National Military Park
Prairie Grove State Park
Pott's Hill
Cross Hollows
Dunigan's Farm
Camp Mudtown
Camp Elm Springs
Camp Osage Prairie
Camp Stephens
McKissick's Springs – Centerton
Eagle Hotel – Bentonville
Confederate Monument – Bentonville
Ben McCulloch Monument – City of Pea Ridge
Headquarters House – Fayetteville
Confederate Cemetery- Fayetteville
National Cemetery - Fayetteville

Downtowns

Bentonville
Rogers
Springdale
Fayetteville
Elm Springs
Cave Springs
Centerton
Pea Ridge
Avoca
Goshen
Greenland
West Fork
Farmington
Winslow

Recreational Areas

Lake Wedington
Lake Sequoyah
Prairie Creek
Horseshoe Bend
Hickory Creek
Beaver Lake State Park
Hobbs State Management Area
Devil's Den State Park

Museums

Peel House
Shiloh Museum
Rogers Historical Museum
U of A Museum
Lowell Historical Museum

Trail Systems

Bentonville Downtown
Lake Bella Vista
Lake Fayetteville
Fayetteville Historic Walk

Area Attractions

War Eagle Mill
Jones Center for Families
Rodeo of the Ozarks

Colleges

U of A
NWA Community College
NWA Technical Institute

