

# Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail

USDA-Forest Service  
Pacific Northwest and Northern Regions  
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# Today's trip



1. What is a National Scenic Trail
2. About the Pacific Northwest Trail
3. Planning

# National Trails System Act (1968)



Pacific Northwest Trail in Fort Casey State Park, near Coupeville, Washington

- Established National Scenic Trails (NSTs) and National Historic Trails (NHTs)
- Pacific Crest Trail and Appalachian Trail were the first NSTs
- Amended to include 11 NSTs and 19 NHTs
- Hiking, equestrian, and (sometimes) mountain biking

# Why do we have National Scenic Trails?

Section 2(a) of the Act:

“to promote the preservation of, public access to, travel within, and enjoyment and appreciation of the open-air, outdoor areas and historic resources of the Nation”



Pacific Northwest Trail near Mt. Shuksan, Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, Washington

# Eleven National Scenic Trails

Trail Name	Year Designated	Miles	Lead
Appalachian	1968	2,174	
Pacific Crest	1968	2,638	
Continental Divide	1978	3,100	
North Country	1980	4,600	
Ice Age	1980	1,200	
Florida	1983	1,000	
Potomac Heritage	1983	700	
Natchez Trace	1983	695	
Arizona	2009	807	
New England	2009	220	
Pacific Northwest	2009	1,200	

- The Pacific Northwest NST and Arizona NST were designated by Congress in 2009 and are administered by the Forest Service.
- Both trails started work on long-term management plans in 2013.

# Brief history of the Pacific Northwest Trail

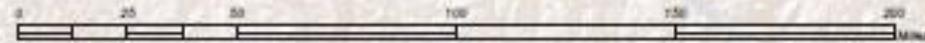
- 1970 – Ron Strickland's big idea
- 1977 – Pacific Northwest Trail Association (PNTA) formed
- 1990s – first active trail maintenance organization formed
- 1999 – Service Knowledge Youth (SKY) program begins
- Mid 2000s – PNTA advocates for NST status
- 2009 – Congress designates PNT as a National Scenic Trail

# The Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail



- Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail
- Other National Scenic Trail
- Interstate Highway
- U.S. Highway
- State Line
- County Line
- ⊙ Capital City
- City

- Land Ownership**
- U.S. Forest Service
  - U.S. Forest Service Wilderness
  - Bureau of Land Management
  - Bureau of Indian Affairs
  - National Park Service
  - Other Federal Land
  - State Land
  - Other Land, Including Private



D. Peterson 17 January 2014

*route subject to change:  
official route will be approved  
by comprehensive plan*



# The Congressional route

- 1,206 miles, ~850 on federal land
  - Forest Service: 597 miles (trail = 400, road = 200)
  - National Park Service: 243 miles
  - Bureau of Land Management: 11 miles
- 300+ miles in Wilderness areas
- 75 miles on state land (State Parks/DNR-State Forest)
- 65 miles on county land (mostly paved roads)
- 63 miles on private land (mostly timber companies)
- 4 miles on Tribal land (Swinomish, Quileute)

# What National Scenic Trail status does

- authorizes the Forest Service to collaborate with partners to manage the Trail as one linear unit
- provides additional resources for management of the Trail and helps improve adjacent trail systems
- can be a valuable promotional tool for local communities



Webb Mountain Lookout on the Pacific Northwest Trail, Kootenai National Forest

# What National Scenic Trail status does not do



Backpackers on the Pacific Northwest Trail in the Salmo-Priest Wilderness

- does not grant access across private lands or affect private landowner rights
- does not prohibit motorized use on existing motorized routes
- does not take away the decision authority of local land managers on the trail within their area

# Planning requirements

- Section 5(e) of the Act requires the Forest Service to submit to Congress “a comprehensive plan for the acquisition, management, development, and use of the trail”
- Also work with local FS/NPS/BLM offices to integrate PNT into primary land use plans



Old farm along the PNT in the Sinlahekin River Valley near Loomis, Washington

# Key components of the management plan



Pacific Northwest Trail at Third Beach, Olympic National Park

- Define the interagency, public-private management vision
- Nature and purpose statement
- Refinement of the Congressional route
- Trail uses
- Identify recreation settings
- Select trail corridor/right-of-way and publish in the Federal Register

# How do we write the management plan?

- Forest Service PNT staff manage the process
- Local offices provide input on the trail in their areas
- Interdisciplinary team of Forest Service resource specialists prepare EIS
- Advisory Council advises staff and decision makers
- Communities and public provide input at all stages
- USFS Regional Forester makes final decision and signs CMP



The Pacific Northwest Trail crosses the Pend Oreille River in Metaline Falls, Washington

# How you can get involved?



Backcountry skiing on the Pacific Northwest Trail at Sherman Pass on the Colville National Forest

- Seeking as much public involvement as possible – ongoing and also NEPA-prescribed formal comment periods
- Gateway community
- Pacific Northwest Trail Association ([www.pnt.org](http://www.pnt.org))
- Nominate yourself for the Advisory Council!

# Planning schedule

	Phase	Start	End
1	Community Engagement / Informal Scoping	1/12	ongoing
2	Project Planning / Start up	6/12	6/13
3	Advisory Council Establishment	10/12	ongoing
4	Internal Scoping and Data Collection	3/13	12/14
5	Establish Planning Team	3/14	10/14
6	Preliminary Proposed Action	1/15	4/15
7	First Advisory Council meeting	4/15	Ongoing, every 6 mo.
8	Public Scoping	4/15	7/15
9	Issues and Response to Comments	7/15	12/15
10	Alternative(s) Development	1/16	7/16
11	Specialist Reports (Interdisciplinary Team)	1/16	7/16
12	Draft Comprehensive Management Plan	4/16	7/16
13	Draft Biological Assessment	6/16	10/16
14	Environmental Impact Statement	8/16	12/16
15	Public Comment	1/17	4/17
16	Final CMP/EIS	4/17	5/17

# Questions? Need more information?

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