

**FSM 2300 – RECREATION, WILDERNESS, AND RELATED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
CHAPTER 2350 – TRAIL, RIVER, AND SIMILAR RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES**



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

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

CHAPTER 2350 – TRAIL, RIVER, AND SIMILAR RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

Directive No.: 2300-2020-1

Effective Date: March 27, 2020

Duration: This amendment is effective until superseded or removed.

Approved: CHRISTOPHER FRENCH
NFS, Deputy Chief

Date Approved: 03/09/2020

Posting Instructions: Amendments are numbered consecutively by handbook number and calendar year. Post by document at the end of the chapter. Retain this transmittal as the first page(s) of this document. The last amendment to this title was 2300-2016-1 to FSM 2350

New Document	2350	108 Pages
Superseded Document	2350 (Amendment 2300-2016-2, 07/19/2016)	108 Pages

**FSM 2300 – RECREATION, WILDERNESS, AND RELATED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
CHAPTER 2350 – TRAIL, RIVER, AND SIMILAR RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES**

2353.3 - Administration of National Recreation, National Scenic, and National Historic Trails

2353.31 - Policy

1. The National Trails System (16 U.S.C. 1242(a)) includes:
 - a. National Recreation Trails. These trails provide a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities and are accessible from urban areas.
 - b. National Scenic Trails. These extended trails are located so as to provide for maximum outdoor recreation potential and for conservation and enjoyment of the nationally significant scenic, historic, natural, or cultural qualities of the areas through which these trails pass (16 U.S.C. 1242(a)(2)).
 - c. National Historic Trails. These trails follow as closely as possible a route of historic significance, so as to protect the route and its artifacts for public use and enjoyment.
 - d. Connecting and Side Trails. These trails are components of National Recreation, National Scenic, and National Historic Trails (16 U.S.C. 1245). Connecting and side trails provide access to and alternate routes for National Recreation, National Scenic, and National Historic Trails.
2. Ensure that management of each trail in the National Trails System addresses the nature and purposes of the trail and is consistent with the applicable land management plan (16 U.S.C. 1246(a)(2)).
3. TMOs for a National Recreation, National Scenic, or National Historic Trail should reflect the nature and purposes for which the trail was established.

2353.32 - Administration of Connecting and Side Trails

Establish connecting and side trails where appropriate (16 U.S.C. 1245). Connecting and side trails complement National Recreation, National Scenic, and National Historic Trails by providing additional public access or additional recreational opportunities. Manage connecting and side trails in accordance with the direction for the trails they complement.

2353.4 - Administration of National Scenic and National Historic Trails

2353.41 - Objectives

**FSM 2300 – RECREATION, WILDERNESS, AND RELATED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
CHAPTER 2350 – TRAIL, RIVER, AND SIMILAR RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES**

Develop and administer National Scenic and National Historic Trails to ensure protection of the purposes for which the trails were established and to maximize benefits from the land.

2353.42 - Policy

Administer National Scenic and National Historic Trail corridors to be compatible with the nature and purposes of the corresponding trail.

CDNST. The nature and purposes of the CDNST are to provide for high-quality scenic, primitive hiking and horseback riding opportunities and to conserve natural, historic, and cultural resources along the CDNST corridor.

2353.43 - Development of the National Scenic and National Historic Trail System

National Scenic Trails, National Historic Study Trails, and National Historic Trails are established by act of Congress (16 U.S.C. 1244(a)-(c)).

2353.43a - National Historic Study Trails

Conduct studies of National Historic Study Trails in accordance with sections 5(b) and 5(c) of the National Trails System Act (16 U.S.C 1244(b) and (c)).

2353.43b - Administration of National Scenic and National Historic Trails

1. Form an advisory council within 1 year of establishment of a National Scenic or National Historic Trail (16 U.S.C. 1244(d)).
2. When it is in the public interest, transfer management responsibilities for a segment of a National Scenic or National Historic Trail from the U. S. Department of Agriculture to the U. S. Department of the Interior through a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the two departments. Develop, operate, and maintain the trail segment for which management responsibilities have been transferred under the laws, regulations, and policies of the department acquiring the management responsibilities, except to the extent the MOU expressly provides otherwise (16 U.S.C. 1246(a)(1)(B)).
3. The Secretary shall submit to Congress a comprehensive trail management plan within 2 fiscal years of establishment of a National Scenic or National Historic Trail, and after consulting with affected Federal agencies, States, and the trail's advisory council, in accordance with section 5(f) of the National Trails System Act (16 U.S.C. 1244(f)).

2353.43c - Relocation of National Scenic and National Historic Trails

A segment of a National Scenic or National Historic Trail corridor may be relocated to preserve the nature and purposes for which the trail was established and to promote sound multiple-use management. Relocation requires the consent of the agency with jurisdiction over the underlying

**FSM 2300 – RECREATION, WILDERNESS, AND RELATED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
CHAPTER 2350 – TRAIL, RIVER, AND SIMILAR RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES**

land. Publish notice of the relocation in the Federal Register. Substantial relocations require an act of Congress (16 U.S.C. 1246(b)).

2353.44 - Management of National Scenic and National Historic Trails

2353.44a - National Scenic and Historic Trails in General

1. Develop and, if necessary, revise a comprehensive plan for acquisition, management, development, and use of each National Scenic and National Historic Trail (16 U.S.C. 1244(e) and (f)).
2. Manage each National Scenic and National Historic Trail in a wilderness area so that the trail and its associated uses are compatible with wilderness management direction.
3. Except as provided in the applicable enabling legislation, do not designate a National Scenic Trail for motor vehicle use. Motor vehicle use of a National Scenic Trail may be specifically authorized as necessary to meet emergencies or to enable access by adjacent landowners (16 U.S.C. 1246; 36 CFR 212.51).
4. 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.

2353.44b - Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDNST)

1. The land management plan for an administrative unit through which the CDNST passes must provide for the nature and purposes of the CDNST (FSM 2353.42) and, in accordance with the programmatic requirements of the National Trails System Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1244(f)), and the CDNST Comprehensive Plan, as amended, must:
 - a. Except where the CDNST traverses a wilderness area and is governed by wilderness management prescriptions (36 CFR Part 293), establish a management area for the CDNST that is broad enough to protect natural, scenic, historic, and cultural features (FSH 1909.12);
 - b. Prescribe desired conditions, objectives, standards, and guidelines for the CDNST; and
 - c. Establish a monitoring program to evaluate the condition of the CDNST in the management area.
2. A CDNST unit plan must be developed for each administrative unit through which the CDNST passes. Each CDNST unit plan must provide for the nature and purposes of the CDNST (FSM 2353.42), and, in accordance with the site-specific requirements in the

**FSM 2300 – RECREATION, WILDERNESS, AND RELATED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
CHAPTER 2350 – TRAIL, RIVER, AND SIMILAR RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES**

National Trails System Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1244(f)), and the CDNST Comprehensive Plan, as amended, must:

- a. Identify and display the segments of the CDNST that traverse that unit.
 - b. Except where the CDNST traverses a wilderness area and is governed by wilderness management prescriptions (36 CFR Part 293) and except where delineated in the applicable land management plan, establish a management area for the segments of the CDNST that traverse that unit that is broad enough to protect natural, scenic, historic, and cultural features (FSH 1909.12);
 - c. Establish the Trail Class, Managed Uses, Designed Use, and Design Parameters for the segments of the CDNST that traverse that unit and identify uses that are prohibited on the segments of the CDNST that traverse that unit (FSH 2309.18).
 - d. Provide for development, construction, signing, and maintenance of the segments of the CDNST that traverse that unit.
 - e. Identify and preserve significant natural, historical, and cultural resources along the sections of the CDNST corridor that traverse that unit.
 - f. Consistent with the provisions of the applicable land management plan and the nature and purposes of the CDNST (FSM 2353.42), establish carrying capacity for the segments of the CDNST that traverse that unit (FSM 2353.44b, para. 1). The Limits of Acceptable Change or a similar system may be used for this purpose.
 - g. Establish monitoring programs to evaluate the site-specific conditions of the CDNST.
3. Monitor implementation of a CDNST unit plan by establishing a program to evaluate and report on the overall condition of the segment of the CDNST that traverses that unit. To the extent practicable, utilize information collected through land management planning and site-specific monitoring programs.
 4. The CDNST may be located in a wilderness area (16 U.S.C. 1131-1136). Recreational use on the CDNST in a wilderness area is governed by regulations at 36 CFR Part 293. Where the CDNST is located in a congressionally designated wilderness study area or an area recommended for designation as a wilderness area in the land management plan, manage the CDNST so as to leave the area unimpaired for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System.
 5. Where the CDNST crosses private property, it should be located within the scope of a permanent easement (FSM 5460.3). Address CDNST access needs in assessing adjustments to land ownership in an administrative unit. Do not acquire land or an interest in land outside the boundary of a federally administered area for the CDNST

**FSM 2300 – RECREATION, WILDERNESS, AND RELATED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
CHAPTER 2350 – TRAIL, RIVER, AND SIMILAR RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES**

without the owner's consent (16 U.S.C. 1244(a)(5)). Do not acquire fee title of more than an average of one quarter mile on either side of the CDNST.

6. Cooperative agreements may be executed with other federal agencies and state, local, and tribal governments for CDNST purposes (16 U.S.C. 1246(h)).

7. Use the Scenery Management System (FSM 2382.1; *Landscape Aesthetics: A Handbook for Scenery Management*, Agricultural Handbook 701, 1995, <http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt>) in developing CDNST unit plans and managing scenery along the CDNST. The one-half mile foreground viewed from either side of the CDNST travel route must be a primary consideration in delineating the boundary of a CDNST management area (para. 2b). The CDNST is a concern level 1 route (*Landscape Aesthetics*, page 4-8), with a scenic integrity objective of high or very high, depending on the trail segment (*Landscape Aesthetics*, page 2-4).

8. Manage the CDNST to provide high-quality scenic, primitive hiking and pack and saddle stock opportunities. Backpacking, nature walking, day hiking, horseback riding, nature photography, mountain climbing, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing are compatible with the nature and purposes of the CDNST (FSM 2353.42). Use the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) and the ROS Users Guide in delineating and integrating recreation opportunities in CDNST unit plans and managing the CDNST (FSM 2311.1). Where possible, locate the CDNST in primitive and semi-primitive non-motorized ROS classes, provided that the CDNST may have to traverse intermittently through more developed ROS classes to provide for continuous travel between the Montana-Canada and New-Mexico-Mexico borders. Locate a CDNST segment on a road only where it is primitive and offers recreational opportunities comparable to those provided by a trail with a Designed Use of Pack and Saddle Stock, provided that the CDNST may have to be located on or across designated routes because of the inability to locate the trail elsewhere (FSM 2353.44b, para. 11).

9. Generally, segments of the CDNST should fall into Trail Class 2 or 3 and have a Designed Use of Pack and Saddle Stock (FSH 2309.18). However, a CDNST segment may fall into Trail Class 1, 2, or 3 and have a Designed Use of Hiker/Pedestrian where a substantial safety or resource concern exists or the direction for the management area provides only for hiker/pedestrian use. Where a CDNST segment has a Designed Use of Hiker/Pedestrian, consider establishing side trails to accommodate pack and saddle stock needs (16 U.S.C. 1245). If the interval between natural water sources is excessive, consider developing and protecting water sources for hikers and pack and saddle stock use.

10. Bicycle use may be allowed on the CDNST (16 U.S.C. 1246(c)), using the appropriate trail design standards, if the use is consistent with the applicable CDNST unit plan and will not substantially interfere with the nature and purposes of the CDNST (FSM 2353.42).

**FSM 2300 – RECREATION, WILDERNESS, AND RELATED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
CHAPTER 2350 – TRAIL, RIVER, AND SIMILAR RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES**

11. Motor vehicle use by the general public is prohibited on the CDNST, unless that use is consistent with the applicable CDNST unit plan and:
- a. Is necessary to meet emergencies;
 - b. Is necessary to enable adjacent landowners or those with valid outstanding rights to have reasonable access to their lands or rights;
 - c. Is for the purpose of allowing private landowners who have agreed to include their lands in the CDNST by cooperative agreement to use or cross those lands or adjacent lands from time to time in accordance with Forest Service regulations;
 - d. Is on a motor vehicle route that crosses the CDNST, as long as that use will not substantially interfere with the nature and purposes of the CDNST (FSM 2353.42);
 - e. Is designated in accordance with 36 CFR Part 212, Subpart B, and:
 - (1) The designated vehicle class and width were allowed on that segment of the CDNST prior to November 10, 1978, and the use will not substantially interfere with the nature and purposes of the CDNST (FSM 2353.42) or
 - (2) The designated segment was constructed as a road prior to November 10, 1978; or
 - f. In the case of over-snow vehicles, is allowed in accordance with 36 CFR Part 212, Subpart C, and the use will not substantially interfere with the nature and purposes of the CDNST (FSM 2353.42).