



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Management Plan Adopted for El Camino Real National Historic Trail**

The National Park Service and Bureau of Land Management have adopted a comprehensive management plan for El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail, the “royal road to the lands of the interior,” traveled in 1598 by New Mexico’s first Hispanic colonists.

The centuries-old route between old Mexico and New Mexico follows the Río Grande from El Paso, Texas, to San Juan Pueblo, New Mexico. This 404-mile stretch is just one-third of the entire trail, which extends 1,200 miles south of the present international border to Mexico City.

The management plan calls for an ambitious program of resource protection and visitor opportunities, including an auto tour route, a certification program to bring privately-owned sites into the trail program, and coordinated interpretation and educational projects. The trail links over 60 places of special importance to the history of the American Southwest. Santa Fe’s Palace of the Governors, the oldest, continuously used governmental office in the continental United States, is a trail landmark, as are the Río Grande crossing used by Juan de Oñate and his colonist expedition on their landmark journey north, the Tomé plaza, and La Bajada Hill. The trail passes through some of the oldest towns in the Southwest, including many of the Pueblos along the Río Grande, and crosses some of the region’s most forbidding landscapes.

North of Las Cruces, on land managed by the Bureau of Land Management, New Mexico’s Jornada del Muerto, or the Deadman’s Journey, offers visitors a chance to see and feel the harsh tablelands crossed by the colonists as they turned away from the river to save time on the two-month trek north. New Mexico’s oldest Hispanic families came up the Camino Real, often on foot, following in the dust of ox- and horse-drawn four-wheeled carros and two-wheeled carretas. Screeching wooden wheels and groaning wagons serenaded thousands taking the lonely road to settle new lands or take trade goods back and forth between Mexico and New Mexico. Today, most will retrace this journey in just a few hours along Interstate 25.

The complete management plan and other visitor opportunities may be found on-line at [www.elcaminoreal.org](http://www.elcaminoreal.org). Printed plans or copies of the plan on CD are available through the Camino Real Administration in Santa Fe. Contact Harry Myers, National Park Service, or Sarah Schlanger, Bureau of Land Management, at 505 988-6717, or 505 438-7454 for more information.

