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Santa Fe Trail Connection
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INTERFACE OF TRAIL AND AGRICULTURAL OPERATIONS (DRAFT)

I. INTRODUCTION

From the onset of the Santa Fe Trail (Trail) planning process a key focus was to accurately identify and resolve agricultural land use compatibility issues. Several methods of information collection and issue resolution relating to agricultural operations were employed during the Trail planning process.

The issues identified by the agricultural community came through loud and clear. In response to those expressed concerns, a package of mitigation measures (solutions) are presented below. Some of the proposed solutions are design related and other solutions are operational in nature (a function of the on-going management of the Trail).

Mitigation Package

The set of solutions in the “mitigation package” are solid in their foundation and venture far beyond what has been offered for other multi-use trails with similar adjacent concerns. The appropriateness and/or effectiveness of the measures presented below, when implemented in their entirety, are intended to inherently minimize or reduce impacts to agricultural operators and adjacent landowners.

The following are solution/mitigation measures proposed to address agricultural operation compatibility. The solutions are paraphrased and listed under each respective issue or topic that has been raised during the Trail planning process.

II. PESTICIDE SPRAYING

Notices Posted

- All Trail entrances will be posted with notices of on-going agricultural activities and stating that the Trail user agrees to using the Trail at his/her own risk.
- Trail users will be advised that agricultural operations will be occurring and may include pesticide spraying, agricultural dust and debris, and burning activities in accordance with State and Local laws/ordinances.
- Notices will state that the Trail is subject to closure without notice to accommodate such activities.
- A policy adopted by the Tulare County Board of Supervisors would incorporate the above notices as a punishable offense.

Ability for Trail Closures

- The Trail will be designed with the ability for its physical closure (of isolated segments) in the event it becomes necessary to facilitate permitted spraying.
- The County’s Trail Manager will be responsible for removing trail users and closing trail segments when pesticide spraying is about to occur, and for re-opening trail segments.
- Notification to the Trail Manager of impending spraying activity will be the responsibility of the Agricultural operators.

Note: The Tulare County Agricultural Commissioner's office is responsible for issuing pesticide spraying permits and regulating the use of pesticides and other agricultural chemicals. As the regulating and enforcement entity for the County, the Agricultural Commissioner's office will place no additional restrictions upon the agricultural operators because of the development of the adjacent Santa Fe Trail as long as pesticides and other agricultural chemicals are applied in compliance with the label, worker safety requirements, weather conditions, drift restrictions, and all other safety requirements as required by federal, state and local laws.

Regarding post pesticide application re-entry provisions, the Agricultural Commissioner's stated that as long as trail users are physically separated from the "treated areas" (defined as the treated foliage of the agricultural crop) by continuous fencing (or similar barrier), trail users will not subject to any pesticide re-entry provisions.

III. BURN ACTIVITY

Notices Posted

- All Trail entrances will be posted with notices of on-going agricultural activities and that the Trail user agrees to using the Trail at their own risk.
- Notices will state that the Trail is subject to closure without notice to accommodate such activities.

Trail Management Closure

- During peak burn times, the Trail manager will check burn day status and initiate closure of the affected segments of the Trail.

IV. SECURITY (THEFT, VANDALISM, TRESPASS)

Security Patrol

- Security personnel will be provided to patrol the Trail as necessary. Security will likely be higher during peak period weekends, spring and summer.
- Portions of the Trail visible from adjacent or nearby streets will have the added security of the local City police and County sheriff.

Mile-Post Mapping

- Mile-posts will be installed at a minimum of one every mile, with corresponding maps distributed to all jurisdictions to promote timelier response.
- All emergency response personnel will be equipped with maps of access points and gates.

Emergency Call Boxes

- Solar powered emergency phones may be installed on an as needed basis.

Notice Posting

- All Trail entrances/crossings will be posted with notices that the trail is adjacent to private property where there are active agricultural operations. Trail users will be advised to stay on the trail and what the ramifications are for trespassing or being on the trail after it is closed.
- Trail users will be advised to be alert to operating machinery and equipment crossing the trails.
- Users will be warned that use of the trail is at their own risk.

Citation Program Established

- The Trail Manager will introduce new County-wide legislation or policy that would enable patrol personnel to issue citations to any persons trespassing on private property. Citation fines are to be set at a rate high enough to act as a deterrent (e.g. in Florida the fine is \$1,000).
- If new County-wide legislation is adopted, security personnel will have the authority to issue citations and/or arrest trespassers.

General Security Measures

- At-grade crossings may be illuminated with overhead lighting.

- Graffiti-resistant construction materials will be utilized wherever possible.
- Rules of the Trail will be enforced by security patrols.

Limited Vehicle Access

- Access to the trail from adjacent Public streets, roads and other public rights of way will be limited to authorized security, and maintenance vehicles only.
- Public access will be controlled by dedicated security patrol and by the installation of fencing, gates or bollards as deemed appropriate to each situation.

Fencing

- Fencing will be provided along both sides of the Trail.
- To mitigate negative aesthetic impacts of the fence, plant material such as vines and/or climbing ivy and other plants will be used. Any proposed plant material along the trail will be selected in conjunction with adjacent property owners on a case by case basis.

Landscaping

- Any ornamental plant material used along the Trail shall be approved by the agricultural commissioner's office. Any plant material which may host pests destructive to agriculture shall be prohibited.

V. CONTINUED USE OF RAIL CORRIDOR RIGHT OF WAY (ROW)

Use of ROW

- It is the objective of the County to allow continued use of excess ROW for agricultural use by adjacent property owners subject to the needs of specific Trail alignments, design and other individual site conditions. All use of adjacent ROW will be mutually agreed upon by the County and adjacent property owners on a case by case basis.

Installation of Gates

- In consultation with and upon approval by private crossing lease holders gates will be designed and placed at existing authorized private at-grade equipment crossings.

VI. GENERAL TRAIL MAINTENANCE

Weed Abatement

- Weed abatement will be conducted by the Trail manager on an as needed basis within the corridor.

Trash Disposal

- The Trail Manager will dispose of trash in trash receptacles along the Trail on an as-needed basis (daily, weekly, monthly).
- Litter (loose debris) clean-up along the Trail will be conducted in conjunction with routine trash disposal runs.
- Adopt-a-trail programs will be initiated by the Trail manager to aid in litter pick up.
- Establishing "Littering Hotline" for dumping incidents will allow incidents to be reported to the Trail manager by either the routine security patrols, the general public using the Trail, or a property owner.
- The Trail manager will dispatch and respond to dumping incidents promptly.

Paving and Pot Hole Maintenance

- Paving, repair, striping, etc., will be evaluated annually and incorporated into the operation and maintenance budget each year.

Rest Stop and Staging Area Maintenance

- All rest stop and staging areas will be checked daily and routinely cleaned and maintained by trail manager.