



# *The Feasibility Study is Underway*

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## What's New? Summer 2012

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This newsletter highlights the activities and work completed on the feasibility study since its inception in the spring of 2011. The study's purpose is to evaluate the feasibility and suitability of adding some 64 new routes to the already designated Oregon, California, Mormon Pioneer, and Pony Express National Historic Trails. The study was authorized by the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act (Public Law 111-11) signed by President Barack Obama in 2009. The study is assigned to the National Trails Intermountain Region of the National Park Service (NPS) for development and completion.



Remnant of the Meek Cutoff as it approaches Camp Creek Valley in Oregon. Photo courtesy of Jim Hambleton

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## Scoping Report

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A scoping report was completed in November 2011 and is available to the public. The report summarizes comments, feedback, and input received from the public during the official public comment period from March 31, 2011 to July 30, 2011. The scoping report can be viewed online at: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/FourtrailFS>

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## Consultation

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The NPS has continued to consult with federal, state, local agencies, American Indian nations, interested organizations, landowners, and other parties.

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## Environmental Assessment

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As part of the feasibility study, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires that the NPS conduct an environmental assessment (EA) to identify the likely effects of study route designation on the human and natural environment, including cultural and natural resources, economic activities, and local communities along the proposed 64 routes. A contract to complete portions of the EA was awarded to a consulting firm in 2011. A draft study and EA is expected for public review in 2014.

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## Route Verifications and Descriptions

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The NPS planning team has drafted and reviewed initial draft route descriptions and historical summaries for each feasibility study route. These drafts are being sent for preliminary review to key individuals who participated in mapping the various routes for the study, to ensure that the maps and descriptions are accurate. Once revisions are made by NPS staff, revised drafts will be provided for advance review by affected public agencies, including state historic preservation offices. In the fall of 2012, the NPS planning team will review the summary materials and evaluate each route for possible addition to the National Trails System.