



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Alaska Long Trail FAQ

Questions for the proposed Alaska Long Trail Feasibility Study

1. Q: How did the BLM choose the proposed routes for the study?

A: The routes were proposed by Alaska Trails, a local non-profit organization, and provided to congressional officials as part of an overall proposal. The proposed routes include existing trails, roads, side trails, and even water routes. Many are conceptual in nature only.

2. Q: Are the proposed routes subject to change?

A: Yes. Proposed routes may change through discovery, analysis in the feasibility study, and feedback from landowners and stakeholders. The BLM may suggest alternate routes be chosen or find that the proposed routes are not a suitable or viable option.

3. Q: What is the timeline to complete the study?

A: Each federal agency has three fiscal years to complete the study after its assigned by Congress. For this project, the BLM must complete the study and submit it to Congress no later than fall/winter of 2025.

4. Q: What criteria are used to determine the suitability and feasibility of the proposed route as a national scenic trail?

A: The criteria are set forth by the National Trails System Act of 1968. Those criteria can be found by visiting the [National Trails System Act](#), section 5(b), page 15.

5. Q: Once the study is completed, does this mean that proposed routes automatically become an authorized trail?

A: No. Only Congress can establish a National Scenic Trail through legislation before any construction or development could occur. Authorizations, rights of way, and easements must be approved.

6. Q: What types of uses could be allowed on a national scenic trail?

A: Potential trail uses allowed on designated components of the national trails system may include, but are not limited to, the following: bicycling, cross-country skiing, day hiking, equestrian activities, jogging or similar fitness activities, trail biking, overnight and long-distance backpacking, snowmobiling, and surface water and underwater activities.

7. Q: How are motorized uses managed on national scenic trails?

A: While Section 7(c) of the National Trails System Act (Act) states that "the use of motor vehicles along any national scenic trail shall be prohibited," Section 7(j) allows vehicles to be permitted on certain trails. These may include, but need not be limited to, snowmobiles, motorcycles, bicycles, four-wheel drive or all-terrain off-road vehicles, and trail access for handicapped individuals.

The feasibility study will examine the appropriateness of motorized trail use along the trail. If Congress designates the Alaska Long Trail as a national scenic trail, they can specify acceptable uses as they did with the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, which permits the use of motorized vehicles on designated segments of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail. Where allowed, the Act intends for motorized use to occur in accordance with regulations prescribed by the appropriate Secretary in accordance with other Federal laws, or any State or local laws.

8. Q: How could current land management change due to a potential designation? Would the federal government own and/or manage the land after potential designation on non-Federal lands?

A: A national scenic trail designation does not change the ownership of the land the trail crosses. The trail would continue to be owned and/or managed by the respective landowner, or agency, after designation.

A National Scenic Trail (NST) designation would necessitate the creation of a comprehensive management plan designed to develop cooperative relationships, authorizations and easements necessary for long-term management.

Currently, the BLM is conducting the Alaska Long National Scenic Trail Feasibility Study. The study will evaluate the characteristics which make the proposed trail worthy of designation as a national scenic trail, as well as the feasibility, suitability, and desirability of designating the route as a national scenic trail. Findings of the trail study will be shared with Congress who has the sole authority to enact legislation to designate new national scenic trails.

9. Q: Could there be designated camping areas along this trail or developed trailheads?

A: National Scenic Trails may contain campsites, shelters, and related-public-use facilities. Reasonable efforts shall be made to provide sufficient access opportunities to such trails and, to the extent practicable, efforts shall be made to avoid activities incompatible with the purposes for which such trails were established. Trailheads could be located in a variety of locations, if authorized. They could be at existing trailhead locations or could be proposed to be developed based recommendations or analysis.

10. Q: How could the trail cross major rivers or other terrain features?

A: The trail study will evaluate the terrain and water features along the proposed route that would restrict access, require development, or otherwise need to be considered for long term feasibility.

11. Q: If authorized by Congress, who could be building the new trails, and to what trail standards?

A: If Congress authorizes the proposed routes as a National Scenic Trail, the trail could utilize a variety of options for development. Those include 1) maximizing the use of existing trails, routes, and roads where available, 2) Use of land manager staff or volunteers, and 3) possible contracts for services.

12. Q: When will trail construction begin?

A: Once BLM finalizes the feasibility study and transmits that to Congress, then and only then, can Congress make the decision to establish the proposed Alaska Long Trail as a National Scenic Trail. Following that, rights of way, authorizations, and easements must be secured for the entirety of the route. Only after that process could construction begin on the project. **No construction will begin as a result of this feasibility study.**

13. Q: How can I keep up to date on the project and upcoming meetings and comment periods?

A: The BLM hosted five public meetings in the spring of 2024 and several more virtual meetings in June 2024. Please visit BLM's eplanning project page at <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2030342/510>.