Plans are well underway for the 2015 Three Trails Conference to be held in Santa Fe, NM. This symposium will bring together 3 nonprofit organizations, all with trail interests in the Santa Fe area. These 3 nonprofits work to achieve their respective goals for these 3 congressionally designated National Historic Trails.

In 1968, Congress established the National Trails System and designated the first national trails. National Historic Trails are extended trails that closely follow a historic trail or route of travel of national significance. Designation identifies and protects historic routes, historic remnants, and artifacts for public use and enjoyment. The 19 current National Historic Trails "follow as closely as possible and practicable the original trails or routes of travel of national historical significance." They celebrate many aspects of our past, including early travels across the continent; the nation's struggle for independence; the migrations of settlers to the west; and the movements and hardships of American Indians. They are administered and managed by the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, USDA Forest Service, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and US Army Corps of Engineers and the Federal Highway Administration has been an important source of funding for them. National Trails are designated by Congress for the crucial role each trail plays for re-tracing American history and celebrating the diverse natural beauty of the United States. The National Trails System provides unique linear corridors for environmental and historical preservation. Building, maintaining, and interpreting the National Trails system thus requires complex collaboration between federal agencies, nonprofit organizations, and private landowners.
A BRIEF HISTORY of the THREE TRAILS

Santa Fe emerged as the hub of the overland continental trade network linking Mexico and United States markets—a network that included not only the Old Spanish Trail, but also the Santa Fe Trail and El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro.

- **El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail**
  
  During the colonial years, New Mexico was tied to the outside world by a single thoroughfare that descended the Rio Grande valley from north of Santa Fe, dropped through the natural gate at El Paso, and continued to Mexico City, some twelve hundred miles to the south. This route of commerce and travel was known as El Camino Real, which meant Royal Road or King’s Highway. Of the great highways leading north, this was the oldest, having been extended by segments throughout the 16th century. Some of El Camino Real had its earliest beginnings as Indian trails. Later, sections of the route were traversed by Spanish conquistadors and colonizers. Finally, with the coming of Juan de Onate’s expedition in 1598, the full length of the trail was defined. During the subsequent 300 years, it witnessed increasingly varied traffic as quantities of trade goods and representatives of different cultures traveled it, bringing with them currents of change that would forever alter the face of this land. In 2000, Congress authorized 404 miles as a National Historic Trail. For more information visit [www.nps.gov/elca](http://www.nps.gov/elca/)

- **Old Spanish National Historic Trail**
  
  Quality woolen goods were transported to Los Angeles, and California-bred horses and mules were brought back to Santa Fe. It took the vision and courage of Mexican trader Antonio Armijo to lead the first commercial caravan from Abiquiú, New Mexico, to Los Angeles late in 1829. Over the next 20 years, Mexican and American traders continued to ply variants of the route that Armijo pioneered, frequently trading with Indian tribes along the way. And it was from a combination of the indigenous footpaths, early trade and exploration routes, and horse and mule routes that a trail network known collectively as the Old Spanish Trail evolved. After the United States took control of the Southwest in 1848 other routes to California emerged, and use of the Old Spanish Trail sharply declined. In 2002, Congress authorized 2,700 miles as a National Historic Trail. For more information visit [www.nps.gov/olsp](http://www.nps.gov/olsp)

- **Santa Fe National Historic Trail**
  
  Between 1821 and 1880, the Santa Fe Trail was primarily a commercial highway connecting Missouri and Santa Fe, New Mexico. From 1821 until 1846, it was an international commercial highway used by Mexican and American traders. In 1846, the Mexican-American War began. The Army of the West followed the Santa Fe Trail to invade New Mexico. When the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ended the war in 1848, the Santa Fe Trail became a national road connecting the United States to the new southwest territories. Commercial freight along the trail continued, including considerable military freight hauling to supply the southwestern forts. The trail was also used by stagecoach lines, thousands of gold seekers heading to the California and Colorado gold fields, adventurers, fur trappers, and emigrants. In 1880 the railroad reached Santa Fe and the trail faded into history. In 1987, Congress authorized 1,203 miles as a National Historic Trail. For more information visit [www.nps.gov/safe](http://www.nps.gov/safe)
THE THREE-TRAILS CONFERENCE

Events will begin at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, September 17, 2014, with all three organizations holding their Board of Directors meetings at the National Trails Intermountain Region (NTIR) NPS headquarters at 1100 Old Santa Fe Trail, Santa Fe, NM. That evening, a welcome reception will be held at the historic La Fonda Hotel on the Santa Fe Plaza, 100 E. San Francisco St., phone 800.523.5002, http://www.lafondasantafe.com/

Friday, September 18, and Saturday, September 19, 2015 the event will be held at the Santa Fe Community Convention Center, 201 W. Marcy Street, with presentations in the morning.
Afternoon field trips will highlight historic trail sites for all three trails in the Santa Fe area—the Santa Fe Trail, the Old Spanish Trail and the El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro. Comfortable buses will take participants to experience the 3 historic trails up close. Tentative plans are to also offer a field trip on Sunday morning to ensure that all participants can view all three trails.

Following the field trips, participants will reconvene for dinner and historic entertainment. Details will be available soon on the meals and entertainment.
General Membership Meetings are being planned by all three organizations. SFTA’s general membership meeting is being planned for Saturday, September 19, beginning at 7:30 a.m. Participants will be able to register for a sit-down breakfast that they can enjoy during the meeting. SFTA Awards and inductees into the Santa Fe Trail Hall of Fame will also take place during this breakfast meeting.

Registration and a finalized schedule will be available here soon.

Visit website page for the above map at:
http://www.geographicus.com/P/AntiqueMap/NewMexicoTrails-stedman-1940