

Public Law 105-290
105th Congress

An Act

Oct. 27, 1998
[H.R. 2186]

To authorize the Secretary of the Interior to provide assistance to the National Historic Trails Interpretive Center in Casper, Wyoming.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

16 USC 1244
note.

SECTION 1. FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.

(a) **FINDINGS.**—The Congress finds and declares the following:

(1) The City of Casper, Wyoming, is nationally significant as the only geographic location in the western United States where four congressionally recognized historic trails (the Oregon Trail, the Mormon Trail, the California Trail, and the Pony Express Trail), the Bridger Trail, the Bozeman Trail, and many Indian routes converged.

(2) The historic trails that passed through the Casper area are a distinctive part of the national character and possess important historical and cultural values representing themes of migration, settlement, transportation, and commerce that shaped the landscape of the West.

(3) The Bureau of Land Management has not yet established a historic trails interpretive center in Wyoming or in any adjacent State to educate and focus national attention on the history of the mid-19th century immigrant trails that crossed public lands in the Intermountain West.

(4) At the invitation of the Bureau of Land Management, the City of Casper and the National Historic Trails Foundation, Inc. (a nonprofit corporation established under the laws of the State of Wyoming) entered into a memorandum of understanding in 1992, and have since signed an assistance agreement in 1993 and a cooperative agreement in 1997, to create, manage, and sustain a National Historic Trails Interpretive Center to be located in Casper, Wyoming, to professionally interpret the historic trails in the Casper area for the benefit of the public.

(5) The National Historic Trails Interpretive Center authorized by this Act is consistent with the purposes and objectives of the National Trails System Act (16 U.S.C. 1241 et seq.), which directs the Secretary of the Interior to protect, interpret, and manage the remnants of historic trails on public lands.

(6) The State of Wyoming effectively joined the partnership to establish the National Historic Trails Interpretive Center through a legislative allocation of supporting funds, and the citizens of the City of Casper have increased local taxes to meet their financial obligations under the assistance agreement and the cooperative agreement referred to in paragraph (4).

(7) The National Historic Trails Foundation, Inc. has secured most of the \$5,000,000 of non-Federal funding pledged by State and local governments and private interests pursuant to the cooperative agreement referred to in paragraph (4).

(8) The Bureau of Land Management has completed the engineering and design phase of the National Historic Trails Interpretive Center, and the National Historic Trails Foundation, Inc. is ready for Federal financial and technical assistance to construct the Center pursuant to the cooperative agreement referred to in paragraph (4).

(b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this Act are the following:

(1) To recognize the importance of the historic trails that passed through the Casper, Wyoming, area as a distinctive aspect of American heritage worthy of interpretation and preservation.

(2) To assist the City of Casper, Wyoming, and the National Historic Trails Foundation, Inc. in establishing the National Historic Trails Interpretive Center to memorialize and interpret the significant role of those historic trails in the history of the United States.

(3) To highlight and showcase the Bureau of Land Management's stewardship of public lands in Wyoming and the West.

SEC. 2. NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAILS INTERPRETIVE CENTER.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the Bureau of Land Management (in this section referred to as the "Secretary"), shall establish in Casper, Wyoming, a center for the interpretation of the historic trails in the vicinity of Casper, including the Oregon Trail, the Mormon Trail, the California Trail, and the Pony Express Trail, the Bridger Trail, the Bozeman Trail, and various Indian routes. The Center shall be known as the National Historic Trails Interpretive Center (in this section referred to as the "Center").

(b) FACILITIES.—The Secretary, subject to the availability of appropriations, shall construct, operate, and maintain facilities for the Center—

(1) on land provided by the City of Casper, Wyoming;

(2) in cooperation with the City of Casper and the National Historic Trails Interpretive Center Foundation, Inc. (a nonprofit corporation established under the laws of the State of Wyoming); and

(3) in accordance with—

(A) the Memorandum of Understanding entered into on March 4, 1993, by the city, the foundation, and the Wyoming State Director of the Bureau of Land Management; and

(B) the cooperative agreement between the foundation and the Wyoming State Director of the Bureau of Land Management, numbered K910A970020.

(c) DONATIONS.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary may accept, retain, and expend donations of funds, property, or services from individuals, foundations, corporations, or public entities for the purpose of development and operation of the Center.

(d) ENTRANCE FEE.—Notwithstanding section 4 of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 (16 U.S.C. 4601-6a), the Secretary may—

- (1) collect an entrance fee from visitors to the Center;
and
(2) use amounts received by the United States from that fee for expenses of operation of the Center.
- (e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary \$5,000,000 to carry out this section.

Approved October 27, 1998.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—H.R. 2186:

HOUSE REPORTS: No. 105-459 (Comm. on Resources).

SENATE REPORTS: No. 105-323 (Comm. on Energy and Natural Resources).

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 144 (1998):

Mar. 30, considered and passed House.

Oct. 2, considered and passed Senate, amended.

Oct. 10, House concurred in Senate amendments.