



File Code: 2350
Route To:

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Subject: Updated Guidance for Continental Divide National Scenic Trail Plan Components

To: Rocky Mountain Region Forest Supervisors: Arapaho and Roosevelt, Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison, Medicine Bow-Routt, Pike and San Isabel, Rio Grande, San Juan, Shoshone and White River National Forests; Northern Region, Regional Forester, Forest Supervisors: Beaverhead-Deerlodge, Bitterroot, Custer-Gallatin, Flathead, Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forests; Southwestern Region, Regional Forester, Forest Supervisors: Carson, Cibola, Gila, and Santa Fe National Forests; Intermountain Region, Regional Forester, Forest Supervisors: Salmon-Challis, Bridger-Teton, and Caribou-Targhee National Forests

The authority for broad-based policy and direction for the development and management of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDNST) is found in the [2009 Comprehensive Plan](#). Individual land management plan direction for the trail varies greatly across forests and was non-existent for some under previous planning policy. The Federal Interagency Leadership Council, which provides consistent leadership and coordinated management of the trail's program activities, recognized the need to provide consistent management direction for the trail. In 2016, recommended plan components were identified and shared with CDNST units to assist with land management plan revision. The purpose of the CDNST plan component guidance is to provide a consistent framework for managing the long-distance, multi-jurisdictional, congressionally designated trail and provide flexibility to address local needs and conditions.

The CDNST Trail Administrator gathered feedback and lessons learned from planners and line officers to gauge the need to revise the recommended CDNST plan components. While the eight units that have used the recommended CDNST plan components appreciate the template and the consistency it brings, they did express a desire for revisions to incorporate lessons learned and clarify language. The revised guidance includes the following changes:

- Added language in the introduction to clarify the purpose and intent of this document and reiterate this is guidance and not a decision document.
- Added and clarified the requirement for identifying the trail corridor (per FSH 1909.12 Chapter 20, Sec. 24.43(1)(c)) to ensure all CDNST plan revision guidance is in one place. Also added clarification that management areas are not required, but a trail corridor where plan components apply is required.
- Added additional example plan component language for desired conditions, objectives, and standards.
- Revised several guidelines to emphasize the management action, i.e., "to protect or enhance the scenic qualities...", but did not change the intent of any recommended guidelines. Clarified language in several guidelines based on feedback from forests with draft or final plans.
- Revised management approaches to ensure they do not direct action.
- Added a "lessons learned" appendix.



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The Rocky Mountain Regional Recreation, Lands, Minerals, and Volunteers Director, Deputy Director, and CDNST Administrator met with the recreation directors and trail program managers in regions 1, 3, and 4 to ensure alignment across all four regions the CDNST pass through. Their feedback was incorporated in the revised guidance document.

As part of our responsibility to coordinate planning efforts among adjoining units and Regions, we are continuing to require that CDNST forests to use the guidance as a basis for developing plan components and gathering public input on the proposed plan. The document provides a common framework for developing CDNST plan components while allowing flexibility for CDNST units to make adjustments based on their unique conditions and public input. Units are expected to engage the CDNST Trail Administrator to discuss changes to the recommended plan components to ensure they align with the CDNST Comprehensive Plan and laws and policies. This direction also applies to any plan amendment involving CDNST plan direction.

The CDNST plan component guidance will continue to be updated based on lessons learned. The Trail Administrator will work closely with line officers, planners, and recreation specialists to incorporate feedback and lessons learned.

For more information on this guidance, please contact Recreation, Lands, Minerals, and Volunteers Director Jason Robertson at jason.d.robertson@usda.gov or (303) 746-9815.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "F. R. Beum", followed by the word "for" in a similar script.

FRANK R. BEUM
Regional Forester

cc: Joe Alexander, Chris Hartman, Danny Montoya, Nancy Brunswick, Jason Robertson, Kent Wellner, Larry Velarde, Brian Poturalski, Chad Schneckenburger, Ben Lara