



## United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
National Trails Intermountain Region  
P.O. Box 728  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87504-0728



IN REPLY REFER TO:

10.A (NTIR)

January 9, 2017

Mr. Lou Austin, President  
3-Trails West, Inc.  
5904 East Bannister Road  
Kansas City, Missouri 64134-1141

Dear Mr. Austin:

As superintendent of the National Trails Intermountain Region (NTIR), National Park Service, I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued participation, advocacy, and support in the broad partnership that the National Park Service is a part of in the commemoration and development of the California, Oregon, and Santa Fe national historic trails in Jackson and Johnson Counties. When completed, the 3-Trails Corridor will provide significant recreational and educational experiences for the diverse communities along its path. The effort already is garnering national attention for its continued success in achieving those same goals for urban populations that are identified in the National Trails System Act of 1968.

This effort is notable nationally for several reasons: it is occurring in one of America's fifty largest urban areas, and is consistent with the National Park Service's new Urban Agenda and its Call to Action for its Centennial Anniversary. Most important and enduring, this is one of the few places in the nation, and perhaps the only place, where three national historic trails begin (or end, depending on one's perspective) and share a common corridor for a substantial distance. That makes Kansas City unique in the nation.

The US Congress established the Oregon National Historic Trail in 1978 to commemorate the westward migration of tens of thousands of emigrants to the Oregon Territory beginning in the 1830s. The Santa Fe Trail became a National Historic Trail in 1987 to commemorate the international and territorial movement of goods and culture to Santa Fe in New Mexico, beginning in the 1820s. Congress established the California National Historic Trail in 1992 to commemorate the largest overland migration of people on the American continent as gold-seekers trekked to California beginning in the late 1840s. All three of these national historic trails

began in the greater Kansas City along the Missouri River, and course through the metropolitan area before diverging at Gardner Junction. That means there is the potential for a 40-mile retracement experience through the two-county area.

I look forward to working with you and others, including the incorporated towns and cities along the route, the two county governments, and the Mid-American Regional Council of Governments to see this effort completed. A significant contribution to this effort could involve raising the awareness of younger generations to the value of the history that occurred in their communities and the opportunities to experience that history along the trails. Any opportunity to outreach and work with the school systems so that they may incorporate these learning experiences into their curriculum will contribute to the public benefit and the sustainability of the trails in Kansas City. In many ways, including increased investment in digital media, we are working together to reach the youth of the Kansas City area and help them to explore the trails. My office is eager to support such efforts and as resources permit, to achieve these common goals we share.

Thanks again Lou, for your continued support and collaboration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A. Mahr', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Aaron Mahr  
Superintendent