

NEIL WONG TRANSCRIPT

NEIL: Okay, alright, hey let me just ask how many of you consider yourself as outdoor people? [unintelligible] person who you like to get out, you like the fresh air[?] that kind of experience. I see the [unintelligible]. Alright, who here regards themselves as *not* being an outdoor recreation person?

[LAUGHTER]

[LAUGHTER – UNINTELLIGIBLE]

NEIL: I'm starting this thing here...

[I.T. HELPING WITH PRESENTATION]

NEIL: So, uh, John asked me to talk about National Trails. And, uh, you know I'm not going to speak about this as a, as an advocate for creating the National Trail but I thought at least we should be informed as to what a National Trail would be and why it is one of many strategies that could be used for the Summit Tunnels. So, I wanted to talk about the National Trails system just so you'll be familiar with how this works.

I broke it ... technically challenged here.

MODERATOR: Outside, outdoors people.

[LAUGHTER]

OTHER VOICE: He's here.

[UNINTELLIGIBLE]

[I.T. HELPING]

NEIL WONG: That should, that's [unintelligible] OK. So, the National Trail System Act was actually created in 1968. And, just to read a bit from the act itself, it's it promotes the preservation of, public access to, travel within and enjoyment and appreciation of open air, outdoor areas and historic resources of the nation.

So, I was going to describe the various trails that would qualify as National Trails. For instance, we have scenic trails which was mentioned earlier by Phil, the Pacific Crest Trail is an example of a National Scenic Trail. Then we have historic trails, that could be something like, in this photograph, the famous Iditarod Trail up in Alaska. Or recreation trails, you might see those closer to home and, in this case, here's one that actually promotes mountain bike

use. And then there are other side, connecting trails that might lead into these other nationally significant trails.

So, by definition, National Scenic Trails, they're extended trails, at least 100 miles in length, provide maximum outdoor recreation potential and conservation and enjoyment of nationally significant scenic, historic, natural and cultural qualities. They may be located so as to represent deserts, marshes, grasslands, in this case, when we talk about the Summit Tunnels, mountains, canyons, rivers, forests, landforms which exhibit significant characteristics from across the nation. Now, Congress is the one that can designate National Scenic Trails, it is an act of Congress.

National Historic Trails are also extended trails but they don't have to be 100 miles in length, and I'll show you some examples of that later. Which mostly follow the routes, the traditional routes, as for example, the Iditarod Trail is over snow. So, it's hard to pinpoint that route on the landform, so you have a spot you can find those lines[?] and places[?] National Historic Trails sort of identify, protect historic routes and its historic remnants and artifacts for public use and enjoyment. Again, these National Historic Trails require an act of Congress to designate a section.

So, then you have the National Recreation Trails, these are, for lack of a better way of describing, not as significant as a Scenic or Historic Trail. They can be established by the Secretary of the Interior which manages the Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management, or the Secretary of Agriculture which oversees the lands on the National Forest System managed by the US Forest Service.

Then we can also have National Trails on some state lands and private lands when they are coordinated and collaborated with the various agencies.

So, you'll hear about these trails or you'll read about them, there are some examples of many National Scenic Trails. Appalachian Trail, okay, goes from Georgia all the way up to Maine. Pacific Crest Trail goes up from the Canadian border down to the Mexican border. Pacific Northwest Trail goes from the Continental Divide all the way to the Pacific Ocean through the northern states, Montana, Idaho and Washington. Continental Divide Trail, North County Trail, the Ice Age Trail in Wisconsin. So, some of these trails are 2,500 miles or so in length and a few others are only a couple hundred miles in length, but they are extended trails.

Now, then you have the Historic Trails, National Historic Trails, the famous Oregon Trail that brought people out West. Lewis and Clark Trail, that those famous explorers traveled on. And, I'll just go through a few more, Trail of Tears Trail, Pony Express Trail, you know a lot of these routes do not have tread[?] left on them. The Pony Express Trail, for instance, you can drive across the Interstate and see remnants of that along the way. Here's an interesting one that's less than a hundred miles, it's the Selma to Montgomery Trail which I believe is only 50 miles in length. And, of course that's the [unintelligible] honors the Civil Rights Movement of the 60s.

So, Congress also recognizes that community involvement is essential, and I think that's why we're here today. And we're talking about getting this community within a larger community interested in this particular project. And Congress definitely recognizes the value of that. And then it also encourages, the act encourages, volunteers, citizen groups to work on the plan developed, maintenance of the trails for the public, and that's what we're doing here as well.

So, here we have this very interesting project and that's why we're here to discuss what it could be. And to borrow a phrase from a book I've read, straw hats, sandals and steel backs[?], that's exactly what this trail represents. And that's probably the story of the Summit Tunnels, and this race to Promontory Point and I'm hoping that during the next day or so we'll get a little closer to understanding where this route ought to go.

And, I think John will probably have Q&As right after this, we can talk more about trails and how trails might be part of that solution.