

105TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. R. 2186

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 31, 1998

Received; read twice and referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural
Resources

AN ACT

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

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.**

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

4 (1) The city of Casper, Wyoming, is nationally
5 significant as the only geographic location in the
6 western United States where 4 congressionally rec-
7 ognized historic trails (the Oregon Trail, the Mor-
8 mon Trail, the California Trail, and the Pony Ex-
9 press Trail), the Bridger Trail, the Bozeman Trail,
10 and many Indian routes converged.

11 (2) The historic trails that passed through the
12 Casper area are a distinctive part of the national
13 character and possess important historical and cul-
14 tural values representing themes of migration, settle-
15 ment, transportation, and commerce that shaped the
16 landscape of the West.

17 (3) The Bureau of Land Management has not
18 yet established a historic trails interpretive center in
19 Wyoming or in any adjacent State to educate and
20 focus national attention on the history of the mid-
21 19th century immigrant trails that crossed public
22 lands in the Intermountain West.

23 (4) At the invitation of the Bureau of Land
24 Management, the city of Casper and the National
25 Historic Trails Foundation, Inc. (a nonprofit cor-
26 poration established under the laws of the State of

1 Wyoming) entered into a memorandum of under-
2 standing in 1992, and have since signed an assist-
3 ance agreement in 1993 and a cooperative agree-
4 ment in 1997, to create, manage, and sustain a Na-
5 tional Historic Trails Interpretive Center to be lo-
6 cated in Casper, Wyoming, to professionally inter-
7 pret the historic trails in the Casper area for the
8 benefit of the public.

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

16 (6) The State of Wyoming effectively joined the
17 partnership to establish the National Historic Trails
18 Interpretive Center through a legislative allocation of
19 supporting funds, and the citizens of the city of Cas-
20 per have increased local taxes to meet their financial
21 obligations under the assistance agreement and the
22 cooperative agreement referred to in paragraph (4).

23 (7) The National Historic Trails Foundation,
24 Inc. has secured most of the \$5,000,000 of non-Fed-
25 eral funding pledged by State and local governments

1 and private interests pursuant to the cooperative
2 agreement referred to in paragraph (4).

3 (8) The Bureau of Land Management has com-
4 pleted the engineering and design phase of the Na-
5 tional Historic Trails Interpretive Center, and the
6 National Historic Trails Foundation, Inc. is ready
7 for Federal financial and technical assistance to con-
8 struct the Center pursuant to the cooperative agree-
9 ment referred to in paragraph (4).

10 (b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this Act are the fol-
11 lowing:

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

16 (2) To assist the city of Casper, Wyoming, and
17 the National Historic Trails Foundation, Inc. in es-
18 tablishing the National Historic Trails Interpretive
19 Center to memorialize and interpret the significant
20 role of those historic trails in the history of the
21 United States.

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

1 **SEC. 2. NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAILS INTERPRETIVE CEN-**
2 **TER.**

3 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary of the Interior,
4 acting through the Director of the Bureau of Land Man-
5 agement (in this section referred to as the “Secretary”),
6 shall establish in Casper, Wyoming, a center for the inter-
7 pretation of the historic trails in the vicinity of Casper,
8 including the Oregon Trail, the Mormon Trail, the Califor-
9 nia Trail, and the Pony Express Trail, the Bridger Trail,
10 the Bozeman Trail, and various Indian routes. The center
11 shall be known as the National Historic Trails Interpretive
12 Center (in this section referred to as the “Center”).

13 (b) FACILITIES.—The Secretary, subject to the avail-
14 ability of appropriations, shall construct, operate, and
15 maintain facilities for the Center—

16 (1) on land provided by the city of Casper, Wy-
17 oming;

18 (2) in cooperation with the city of Casper and
19 the National Historic Trails Interpretive Center
20 Foundation, Inc. (a nonprofit corporation estab-
21 lished under the laws of the State of Wyoming); and

22 (3) in accordance with—

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

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

5 (c) DONATIONS.—Notwithstanding any other provi-
6 sion of law, the Secretary may accept, retain, and, subject
7 to the availability of appropriations, expend donations of
8 funds, property, or services from individuals, foundations,
9 corporations, or public entities for the purpose of develop-
10 ment and operation of the Center.

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

14 (1) collect an entrance fee from visitors to the
15 Center; and

16 (2) subject to appropriations, use amounts re-
17 ceived by the United States from that fee for ex-
18 penses of operation of the Center.

19 (e) CONCESSIONS.—The Secretary may—

20 (1) take actions to encourage and enable pri-
21 vate persons to provide and operate facilities and
22 services at the Center in the same manner and ex-
23 tent as the Secretary may take such actions, with re-
24 spect to areas administered by the National Park
25 Service, under the Public Law 89–249 (16 U.S.C.

1 20a et seq.), popularly known as the National Park
2 System Concessions Policy Act; and

3 (2) subject to appropriations, use amounts re-
4 ceived by the United States from such facilities and
5 services for development and operation of the Cen-
6 ter.

7 (f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
8 are authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary
9 \$5,000,000 to carry out this section.

Passed the House of Representatives March 30,
1998.

Attest:

ROBIN H. CARLE,

Clerk.