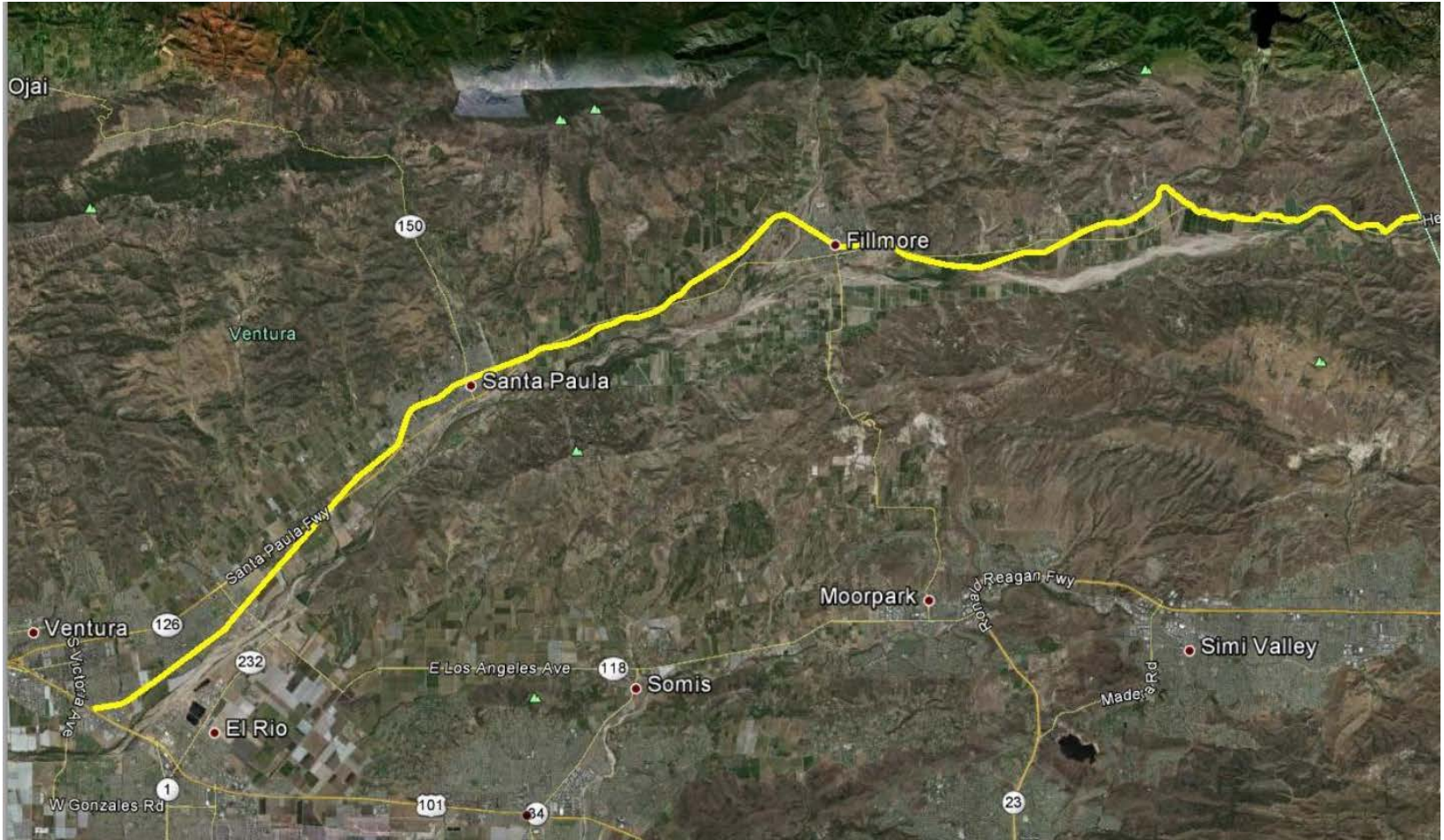


Trails and Agriculture: Bridging Productive and Recreational Landscapes

April 23, 2015



Origins of Study





Origins of Study

- Find ways that existing trails have maximized compatibility with agricultural operations
- Identify methods to guide trail planning that protect the interests of both farmers and trail users



Process

- National inventory of existing trails in agricultural settings
- Review of relevant literature and programs
- Interviews with farm and trail operators



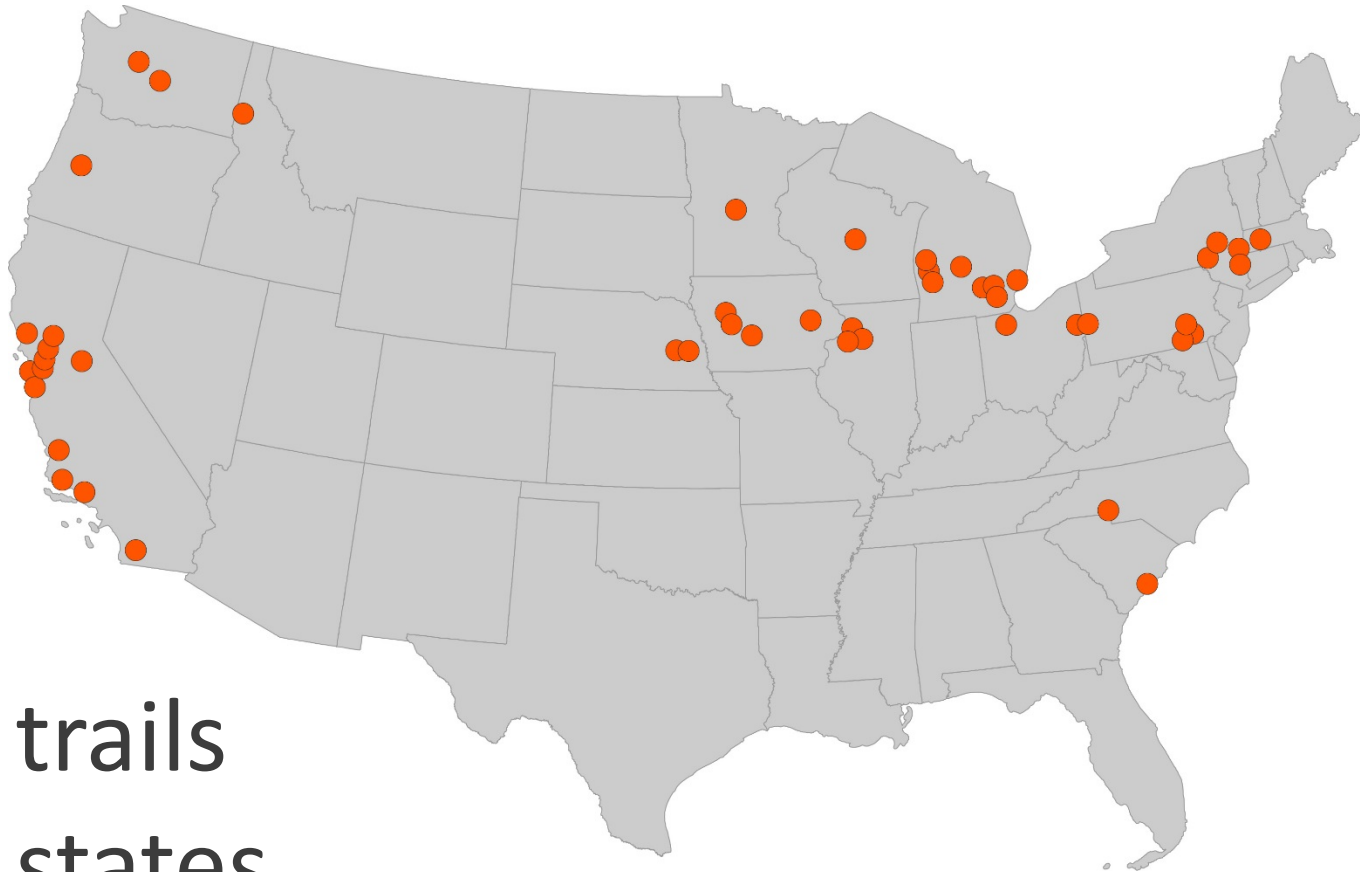
Trail Selection Criteria

- Pass through or adjacent to active agricultural areas
- Near high-value crops and orchards
- Paved surface and/or high levels of use
- Existing or historical rail use
- Priority given to projects in California
- Detailed information available from trail and agricultural operators





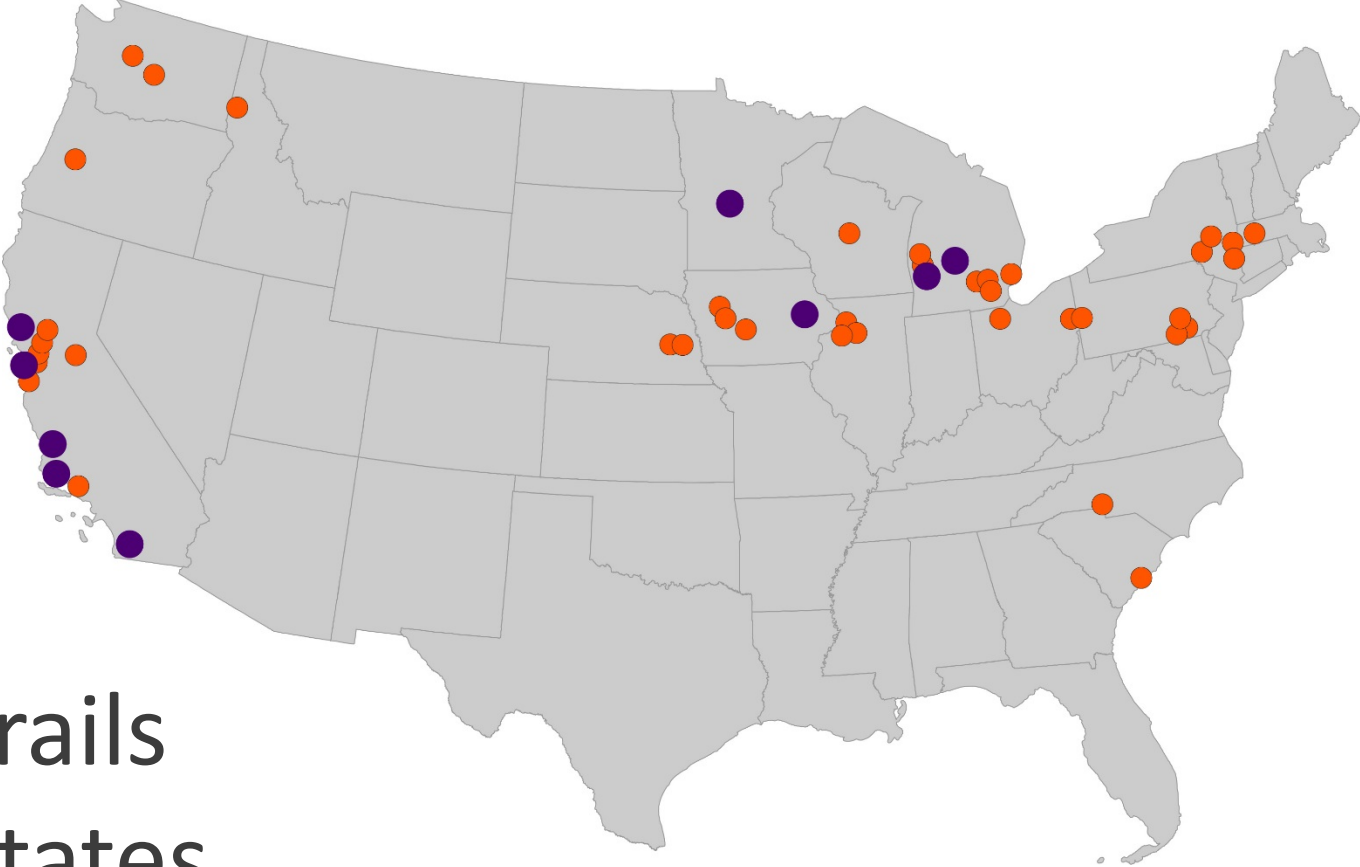
National Trail Inventory



37 trails
16 states



Trails Selected for In-Depth Study



9 trails
4 states

Literature/Program Review

- Most literature related to agritourism
- Napa Valley's AG RESPECT program
- British Columbia's *Trails through Agriculture Areas*





Expressed Concerns

- Theft and vandalism
- Crop contamination and weeds
- Public safety
- Disruption of operations
- Encroachments onto trail
- Shading crops



Strategies for Success

- Design Strategies
- Management Strategies
- Indemnification
- Building Consensus



Design Strategies

- Fencing
 - Lodge pole
 - Chain link





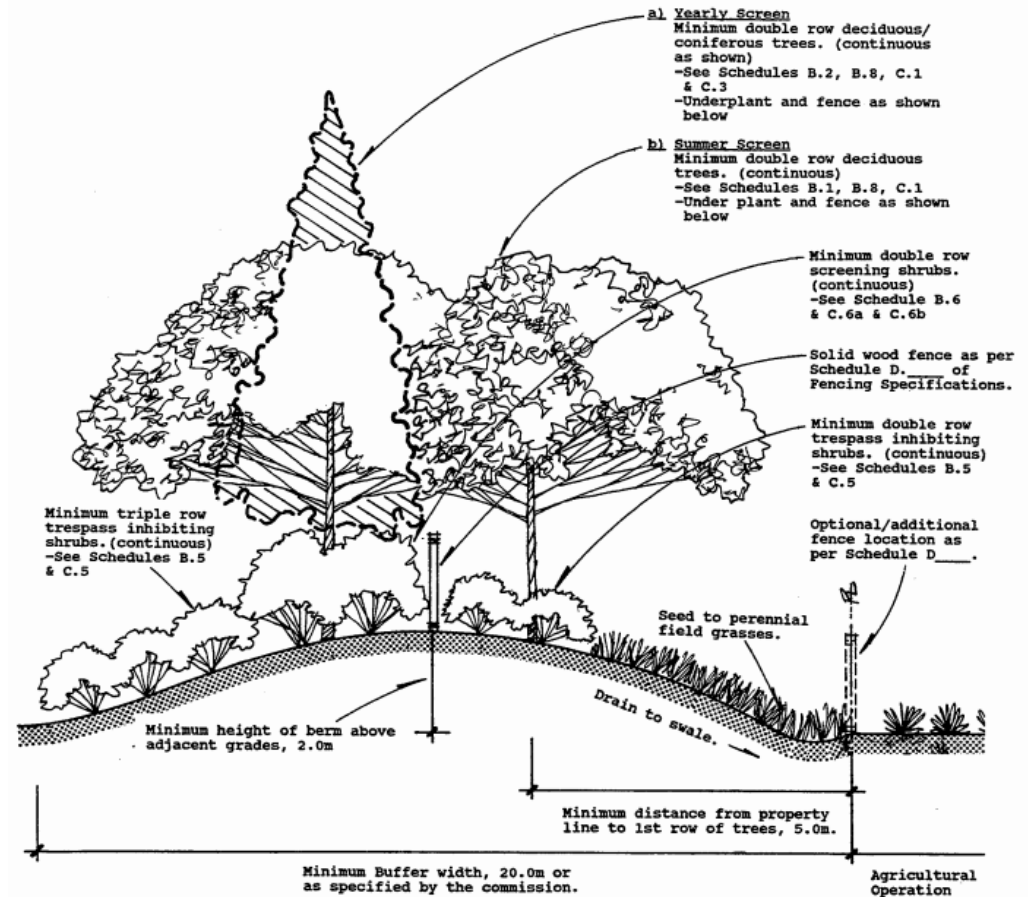
Design Strategies

- Fencing
 - Wire



Design Strategies

- Hedges
- Buffers



Design Strategies

Trail Crossings

- Design trail to minimize crossings
- Discuss trail crossings with each farmer to ensure adequate crossings are provided

*Requests from farmers are handled on an individual basis, and are almost always related to crossings.
- Steve Hahn, Washington State Parks*



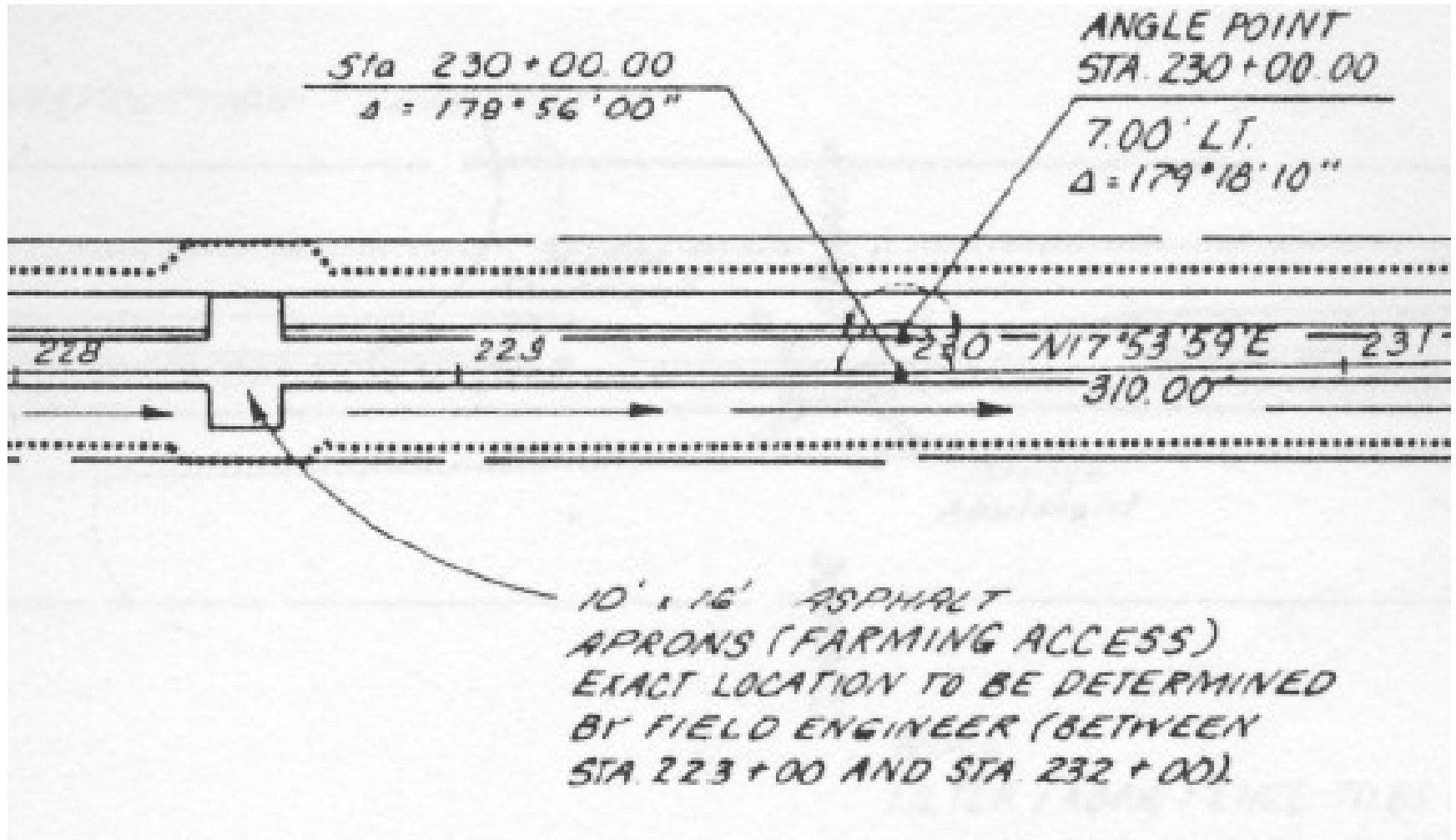
Design Strategies

Trail Crossings & Gates

- Where needed, add gaps in fencing and/or gates to accommodate farm equipment
- Reinforce crossings to minimize trail damage from farm equipment



Safe Farm Equipment Crossings





Design Strategies

Gates

- Allow trail closure for specific farm operations





Crossings

- In places where the trail did not have a good base at a farm crossing it should be reinforced.
- Signs need a greater distance setback than at a normal intersection to allow wide farm equipment plenty of clearance.



Design Strategies

Signage Types

- Regulatory
 - Stay on the trail/no trespassing
- Etiquette
 - Watch for and yield to farm equipment
- Warning
 - Spraying schedules
- Informational
 - Notice of trail closures
- Wayfinding



Design Strategies



Design Strategies



Design Strategies



Design Strategies

Lighting

- Improves safety
- Allows use by commuters

A bike path makes theft harder, not easier. We installed lights, and it gets so much use there are always eyes on the trail.
- Matt Dobberteen, Santa Barbara County Public Works



Management Strategies

- Spray during specific hours
- Gate closures to be requested by farmers, allowing for spraying and equipment crossings



Management Strategies

- Regular and responsive trail maintenance
- Patrol by local authorities
- Address farmers' concerns as they arise

If I could do it all over again, I would have pushed for more stringent trash cleanup requirements from the trail operator.

- Matt Witman, Citrus Farmer, San Diego, CA





Indemnification

Existing law protects public entities and easement grantors from legal claims

- California Government Code § 831.4
- California Civil Code § 846

Private landowners protected as long as:

- No invitation
- No fee charged
- No willful or malicious intent

Specific indemnification and insurance

- San Diego County Ordinance Number 9233
- San Diego County JPA insurance

Indemnification was a dealbreaker – farmers and the farm bureau would have never supported the trail without it.

- Matt Witman, Citrus Farmer, San Diego, CA



What Did We Learn?

- Many projects initiated with significant community concerns
- After construction, problems few and far between
- Similar responses from both trail managers and farmers

If someone wanted to steal from a farm, they'd find a place where no one could see them, not a trail with steady use.

- Matt Dobberteen, County of Santa Barbara

My husband and I were initially opposed to the trail, with concern about trespassing, but this has not been an issue. And now our family uses the trail.

- Joyce Squires, K&J Squires Farms, Linn County, IA

Responses from Trail Managers



...no complaints since the trail went in. Many farmers have since become supporters of the trail.
- Shawna Anderson, San Dieguito River Park

No problems reported with agricultural spraying, trespassing or littering from the public.

- Peter Theismann, Park Director, Stearns County Parks, MN

Responses from Farmers

[The trail] has not interfered with my operation at all, it's been a successful project.

- John Giusti, Farmer, San Mateo County, CA

I've had no problems with the trail. I walk my dog along the trail to check on my crops.

- Ned Welder, Farmer, Montcalm County, MI

We were very concerned about trespassing before the trail was built, but have had no problems with the trail or trail users. We are now trail users, it is a very positive thing for the community.

- Jan Pearl, Farm Owner, Montcalm County, MI



Infrequent Incidents

Occasionally homeless pass through and there is minor vandalism, but not serious enough to involve the authorities. Trail users don't cut through the farm property.

- John Givens, Farm Operator, Santa Barbara County, CA



We've had 4 incidents in 20 years where the trail has been sprayed by a farmer.

- Don Stearns, Friends of the Fred Meijer Trail, Montcalm County, MI

I've experienced no problems with the trail, other than a deer hunter using it on occasion.

- Robert Spencer, Farm Operator Montcalm County, MI

Notable Incidents



Trespassing hasn't been a major problem but one time a bicycle race took place on the trail, and one of the racers got lost and strayed onto the farm and a pack of racers followed.

- Matt Witman, Citrus Farmer, San Diego, CA

Building Consensus

- Address individual farmers' concerns
- Keep lines of communication clear and responsive
- If a safe condition or consensus cannot be achieved, reroute the trail as necessary

The ability to work as a team is key to success.
- Paul Ringgold, Peninsula Open Space Trust

Conflicts with farmers during the planning phase were resolved early on. No conflicts or issues have been reported since.

- Wes Lomax, Michigan Department of Natural Resources



Building Consensus (cont.)

- Maintain the trail and educate trail users
- Promote trail etiquette
- Consider a wide range of design and management solutions for specific needs.



*Individual agreements were arranged with farmers and communities, formed over decades.
- Kevin Thusius, Director of Conservation, Ice Age Trail, WI*

Trails Supporting the Farm Economy



“When the trail developed, this farm only had cows next to the trail. They sold ice cream and put up a small hut on their farm next to the trail. It has grown ever since and is a destination for trail users and the public in the area.” - Paul Yauk, MI DNR

*“MI tries to work with the Agricultural community on partnership like this with farm markets and other ventures that assist locally grown goods.”
- Paul Yauk, MI DNR*

Trails Supporting the Farm Economy

- Lake Hills Greenbelt, Bellevue, WA
 - Lake Hills Farm Fresh Produce stand
 - Larsen Lake Blueberry Farm



Next Steps

- Additional Research
 - How do issues vary based on types of crops and farmers' specific operational needs?
 - Larger sample size
- Design and Management Guidelines
 - Buffer materials, dimensions
 - Fencing
 - Gates/access
 - Trail crossings and closures
 - Signage



- R**ESPECT OUR WORKING FARMS & VINEYARDS
- E**XPECT AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES & KEEP CLEAR
- S**TAY WITHIN TRAIL BOUNDARIES (PETS, TOO)
- P**REVENT SPREAD OF NON-NATIVE SPECIES
- E**LIMINATE ALL TRACE & TRASH (FROM PETS, TOO)
- C**HECK YOUR NOISE LEVELS
- T**AKE RESPONSIBILITY AND REPORT PROBLEMS

AGRESPECT.ORG













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PROTECT THESE PLANTS

Please Avoid This Sensitive Area

...WITH YOUR HELP, the young plants will grow to provide valuable river habitat and erosion control. The young plants are fragile and easily damaged, so please avoid using the area. This project represents a committed effort to provide for wildlife habitat, erosion control & improved visual quality on the Napa River. Public funds have paid for this revegetation project. Please try and help protect the plants and this beautiful area.



US Army Corps of Engineers / Sacramento District
Napa County Flood Control and Water Conservation District





RAIL WITH TRAIL REGULATIONS

1. No motorized vehicles
2. Stay on the trail
3. Be alert for passing trains
4. Do not trespass on railway property
5. Do not cross tracks except at marked crossings
6. Bikes reduce speed and call out when passing
7. Yield to pedestrians
8. Bikes must be walked at all street crossings
9. Trail Hours: Sunrise to Sunset

CVC 21202
NMC 604.170, 9.08.010, 10.32.070, 12.63

City of Napa Rail Trail

Trail courtesy and safety are your responsibility
Trail Hours: Sunrise to Sunset



BICYCLISTS
Always control your speed
Yield to Pedestrians and Skaters



PEDESTRIANS
Be alert and courteous
Allow bicyclists and skaters to pass



SKATERS/SKATEBOARDERS
Always control your speed
Be aware of other trail users



Dogs and other domesticated animals must be on leash
Discharge of firearms or air-powered weapons prohibited
Use trash bins or pack litter out
Alcoholic beverages prohibited
Stay on designated trails
No motorized vehicles
Bikes must be walked at all crossings

Rules enforced by City of Napa

CVC 21202
NMC 604.170, 9.08.010, 10.32.070, 12.63



Businesses and trails





SAFE



Trails for all users.