

**Public Trail Amendments**  
**2026 GENERAL SESSION**  
**STATE OF UTAH**  
**Chief Sponsor: Doug Owens**  
**Senate Sponsor:**

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**LONG TITLE**

**General Description:**

This bill addresses the designation of a recreational trail as a state trail.

**Highlighted Provisions:**

This bill:

- defines terms;
- establishes the process for designating a state trail;
- addresses management of state trails; and
- authorizes rulemaking by the Division of Outdoor Recreation to:
  - establish the process for completing and submitting an application; and
  - administer management of a state trail.

**Money Appropriated in this Bill:**

None

**Other Special Clauses:**

None

**Utah Code Sections Affected:**

ENACTS:

**79-5-601**, Utah Code Annotated 1953

**79-5-602**, Utah Code Annotated 1953

**79-5-603**, Utah Code Annotated 1953

**79-5-604**, Utah Code Annotated 1953

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*Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:*

Section 1. Section **79-5-601** is enacted to read:

**Part 6. State Trails**

**79-5-601 . Definitions.**

(1) "Application" means a written application that a person submits to the division to nominate an existing recreational trail located on public land for designation as a state

31 trail.

32 (2) "Committee" means:

33 (a) if the Legislature is not in session, the Natural Resources, Agriculture, and  
34 Environment Interim Committee; or

35 (b) if the Legislature is in session, the House or Senate Natural Resources, Agriculture,  
36 and Environment Committee.

37 (3) "Public land" means land owned or managed by a state or federal entity.

38 (4) "State trail" means a recreational trail:

39 (a) located on public land;

40 (b) confined to the smallest area compatible with proper care and management of the  
41 recreational trail; and

42 (c) designated in accordance with this part.

43 Section 2. Section **79-5-602** is enacted to read:

44 **79-5-602 . Application for state trail -- Division duties -- Committee duties --**

45 **Rulemaking.**

46 (1) A person may submit an application to the division to designate a state trail.

47 (2) If the division receives a completed application described in Subsection (1), the division  
48 shall:

49 (a) evaluate the application;

50 (b) submit the completed application and the results of the division's evaluation to the  
51 following entities or individuals for review, as applicable:

52 (i) the Utah Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Advisory Committee created in  
53 Section 79-7-206;

54 (ii) the legislative body of a county that contains some portion of the proposed state  
55 trail within the county's geographic borders;

56 (iii) the legislative body of a municipality that contains some portion of the proposed  
57 state trail within the municipality's geographic borders;

58 (iv) each legislator whose legislative district is located within the geographic borders  
59 of the proposed state trail; and

60 (v) a state agency if the proposed state trail is located within the jurisdictional  
61 boundaries of the state agency; and

62 (c) provide a written report to a committee that includes:

63 (i) the results of the division's evaluation described in Subsection (2)(a); and

64 (ii) any resolution or comment the division received from an entity or individual

- 65                    described in Subsection (2)(b).
- 66    (3) The division may:
- 67            (a) evaluate private and federal land with the potential to be purchased by, transferred to,
- 68            or leased to the state for potential designation as a state trail; and
- 69            (b) enter into negotiations with a relevant federal agency or private entity to pursue the
- 70            transfer, sale, or lease of private or federal land for the proposed state trail, as
- 71            appropriations allow.
- 72    (4) Except as provided in Subsection (5), after reviewing a report described in Subsection
- 73            (2)(c), a committee may:
- 74            (a) recommend that the Legislature and governor approve the proposed state trail in
- 75            accordance with Section 79-5-603; or
- 76            (b) return the report to the division for further study and evaluation.
- 77    (5) A committee may not recommend a proposed state trail to the Legislature if:
- 78            (a) a county or municipality described in Subsection (2)(b)(ii) or (iii) adopts a resolution
- 79            opposing the proposed state trail; or
- 80            (b) designating the state trail may cause a state agency to breach a fiduciary, contractual,
- 81            or other legal obligation governing management or use of land that is included within
- 82            the geographic borders of the proposed state trail.
- 83    (6) The division may make rules in accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah
- 84            Administrative Rulemaking Act:
- 85            (a) to establish the process for the submission of an application described in Subsection
- 86            (1); and
- 87            (b) for the administration of a state trail, subject to valid existing rights and Section
- 88            79-5-604.
- 89            Section 3. Section **79-5-603** is enacted to read:
- 90            **79-5-603 . Designation.**
- 91            (1) The Legislature and the governor shall designate a state trail through concurrent
- 92            resolution.
- 93            (2) Notwithstanding the requirements described in Section 79-5-602, the Legislature and
- 94            governor may act under this section to designate a state trail.
- 95            Section 4. Section **79-5-604** is enacted to read:
- 96            **79-5-604 . Management of state trails.**
- 97            (1)(a) Subject to Subsection (2), the division is responsible for the management of a
- 98            state trail.

99 (b) The division may contract with another agency or entity for management services  
100 related to the management of a state trail.

101 (2) Upon Title 63L, Chapter 8, Utah Public Land Management Act, taking effect as  
102 described in Section 63L-8-602, the government entity responsible for management of  
103 the public lands is responsible for the management of a state trail.

104 Section 5. **Effective Date.**

105 This bill takes effect on May 6, 2026.