



National Forest System – Natural Resources | May 2026

National Summary Analysis

Requirements Related to Long-Distance Bike Trials in the EXPLORE Act

The EXPLORE Act (P.L. 118-234) was signed into law on January 4, 2025, to improve recreation opportunities and access across Federal lands and neighboring jurisdictions. Section 121 of the EXPLORE Act establishes requirements related to long-distance bike trails. Section 121 “directs Interior and the Forest Service to identify (1) no fewer than 10 long-distance bike trails that make use of existing trails and roads, and (2) no fewer than 10 areas in which there is an opportunity to develop or complete a trail that would qualify as a long-distance bike trail.” For purposes of Section 121, a long-distance bike trail is defined as “a continuous route of at least 80 miles that, among other requirements, primarily consists of natural trails and, to the extent practicable, makes use of existing federal recreational lands.” While Section 121 requires the recognition of at least 10 existing trails (currently used for bicycling), and at least 10 potential trails as Biking on Long Distance Trails (BOLT), section 121 does not in and of itself authorize any new on-the-ground activity or disturbances. Any new trail or related facility construction will require site specific NEPA analysis. Using biking trails and developing or completing trails may create economic and recreational opportunities for the public, including Tribal communities.

What are the implications for Tribes?

Implementation of Section 121 of the EXPLORE Act may affect Tribes, as the agencies expect that identification of BOLT routes could result in increased trail use. Seeking tribal input early in the process is an important aspect of implementation. Tribes may be affected in the following ways:

- **Tourism/Interpretation:** Increased trail use may present opportunities for Tribes to educate trail users on specific areas of interest.
- **Economic Development:** Trail users contribute to local economies, and more use could lead to larger economic contributions.

- **Tribal Resources:** Increase trail use may be undesirable in some sensitive locations.
- **Recreation:** Trails contribute to personal and societal health and enjoyment.
- **Collaboration:** Identification and management of BOLT routes provide increased opportunities for collaboration between Tribes, agencies and trail users.

Does Section 121 Impact Current Policy?

EXPLORE Act requirements result in recognition of existing and potential trails. They do not impact policy, change land use plan designations, or authorize on-the-ground activities or disturbances. Any new trail or related facility construction will require site-specific consideration and analysis prior to action.

How can Tribes request consultation?

Tribal governments may request consultation with national, regional, and local agency consulting officials by contacting your local Tribal liaison or emailing SM.FS.otrtribalcon@usda.gov.

Where can I find more information?

This summary analysis, and information regarding other agency actions, is available on the Forest Service Office of Tribal Relations website:

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/working-with-us/tribalrelations/national-consultation>.

For other questions or comments, please email:

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