

1 **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION - OLD SPANISH TRAIL**

2 **DESIGNATION**

3 2016 GENERAL SESSION

4 STATE OF UTAH

5 **Chief Sponsor: Ralph Okerlund**

6 House Sponsor: Kay L. McIff

8 **LONG TITLE**

9 **General Description:**

10 This concurrent resolution of the Legislature and the Governor urges the National Park
11 Service to include the Fish Lake Cutoff in the official designation of the Old Spanish
12 Trail.

13 **Highlighted Provisions:**

14 This resolution:
15 ▶ urges the National Park Service to include the 72-mile trail known as the Fish Lake
16 Cutoff, which joins the main branch of the Old Spanish Trail at the confluence of
17 the East Fork of the Sevier and the Sevier River near Junction, Utah, in the official
18 designation of the Old Spanish Trail.

19 **Special Clauses:**

20 None

22 *Be it resolved by the Legislature of the state of Utah, the Governor concurring therein:*

23 WHEREAS, the Old Spanish Trail was an early western trade route between Santa Fe,
24 New Mexico, and Los Angeles, California;

25 WHEREAS, the Old Spanish Trail was used by traders, trappers, emigrants, and
26 possibly prospectors;

27 WHEREAS, there are several shortcuts and detours on the Old Spanish Trail, but none
28 are better documented than the Fish Lake Cutoff in central Utah;

29 WHEREAS, the 72-mile long Fish Lake Cutoff, called the "Summer Branch," was

30 defined by Captain John W. Gunnison in 1853;

31 WHEREAS, the Fish Lake Cutoff split from the main branch of the Old Spanish Trail
32 two and a half miles south from Ivie Creek in Red Creek Canyon;

33 WHEREAS, the Fish Lake Cutoff rejoins the main branch of the Old Spanish Trail at
34 the confluence of the East Fork of the Sevier and the Sevier River near Junction, Utah;

35 WHEREAS, the Fish Lake Cutoff shaved only 21 miles from the journey of trail
36 travelers, but it led them to the lush grasses in Johnson Valley and Fish Lake, which teemed
37 with fish that provided much needed protein;

38 WHEREAS, the Fish Lake Cutoff enters the Fish Lake Basin from the banks of Lake
39 Creek on the north end of the lake;

40 WHEREAS, the trail passes within a hundred feet of the Moon Ridge fishing village;

41 WHEREAS, this site was recorded in the early 1990s by Lincoln Land Community
42 College of Springfield, Illinois;

43 WHEREAS, in 1996, the site was excavated by a BYU archaeological field school,
44 which discovered a fishing village intermittently used from roughly 300 A.D. into the Late
45 Prehistoric period;

46 WHEREAS, historic trade goods were found in the upper levels of the site, including
47 metal arrow points, a moccasin awl, tinklers, and glass beads from approximately 1840;

48 WHEREAS, recent surveys by the Fishlake National Forest along the Fish Lake Cutoff
49 found conclusive proof that the trail was heavily used during the heyday of the Old Spanish
50 Trail;

51 WHEREAS, the tree ring studies document the use of both the Fish Lake Cutoff and the
52 Old Spanish Trail before 1829, suggesting that the Old Spanish Trail and Fish Lake Cutoff
53 travelers were following a well-established system of trails established by Spanish merchants
54 and perhaps prospectors 34 years before the previously estimated period of use;

55 WHEREAS, some of the trail travelers that used the Fish Lake Cutoff, or were nearby
56 at the junction of the main branch, include Kit Carson, Lieutenant George Brewerton, Jedediah
57 Smith, Orville Pratt, Benjamin Chouteau, Denis Julien, Lieutenant E. K. Beale, Lieutenant

58 E.G. Beckwith, Colonel W.W. Loring, the Elk Mountain Mission, and Wakara;

59 WHEREAS, beginning in 2009 the Fishlake National Forest began an intensive
60 archaeological survey of the multiple corridors of the Old Spanish Trail and the Fish Lake
61 Cutoff;

62 WHEREAS, the archaeological survey has employed a variety of methods to unlock the
63 keys to the story of Utah's sections of the Old Spanish Trail and the Fish Lake Cutoff, including
64 pedestrian survey, satellite imagery, computer image enhancement programs,
65 dendrochronology, protein residue analysis, historical research, herding strategies and stock
66 movement, communications with professional peers, and the involvement of the general
67 public;

68 WHEREAS, these efforts were awarded by the concurrence of the Utah State Historic
69 Preservation Officer that the Utah sections of the Old Spanish Trail and the Fish Lake Cutoff
70 were eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places;

71 WHEREAS, in 2013, the Utah sections of the Old Spanish Trail and the Fish Lake
72 Cutoff were listed by the Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places, or "Keeper of the
73 Register";

74 WHEREAS, due to the eligibility determination of both the Old Spanish Trail and the
75 Fish Lake Cutoff segments in the Fishlake National Forest, Utah is required by the National
76 Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, to protect and preserve Utah's section of the
77 trails from internal and external impacting agents;

78 WHEREAS, a management plan is also being prepared to guide management practices
79 and allow the public to enjoy these historical wonders; and

80 WHEREAS, inclusion of the Fish Lake Cutoff in the official designation of the Old
81 Spanish Trail would be a fitting capstone to all of the efforts over many years to recognize the
82 complete expanse of this trail:

83 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of the state of Utah, the
84 Governor concurring therein, urges the National Park Service to include the 72-mile trail
85 known as the Fish Lake Cutoff, which joins the main branch of the Old Spanish Trail at the

86 confluence of the East Fork of the Sevier and the Sevier River near Junction, Utah, in the
87 official designation of the Old Spanish Trail.

88 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to the National
89 Park Service, the Lincoln Land Community College, the Brigham Young University
90 Department of Anthropology, the Fishlake National Forest Offices, the Utah State Historic
91 Preservation Officer, and the Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places.