



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE
COST ESTIMATE

March 26, 1998

S. 1069

National Discovery Trails Act of 1997

*As ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
on March 11, 1998*

Assuming appropriation of the necessary amounts, CBO estimates that implementing S. 1069 would cost the federal government about \$1 million over the next two or three fiscal years and about \$0.5 million annually thereafter. Enacting S. 1069 would not affect direct spending or receipts; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures would not apply. The bill contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 and would have no significant impact on the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

S. 1069 would establish “national discovery trails” as a new category within the National Trails System (NTS). National discovery trails would be extended, continuous, interstate trails designated on federal lands (or nonfederal property with the consent of the owner). As for other national trails, each discovery trail would be administered by the Secretary of Agriculture (Forest Service) or the Interior (National Park Service), as appropriate. Additionally, the respective secretary would have to manage each discovery trail in cooperation with at least one trailwide volunteer-based organization.

Finally, the bill would designate a 6,000-mile route as the American Discovery Trail. This first national discovery trail would be managed by the National Park Service (NPS), which would be prohibited from acquiring any land outside of federally administered areas solely for the purpose of the trail. The NPS would have three years to submit a comprehensive management plan for the development and use of the federal portions of the trail. The bill also would direct the agency to provide technical assistance to state and local governments and private landowners for planning and managing nonfederal portions of the trail.

CBO estimates that the cost of adding another category to the NTS would have no effect on the federal budget. Establishing the American Discovery Trail would involve some additional federal expense. But because most sectors of the new trail are already owned by the federal government or otherwise protected and interpreted, we estimate that these costs

would be less than \$1 million. Such one-time costs would include amounts to develop the comprehensive management plan, provide technical assistance, and create exhibits and other interpretive materials. In addition, the NPS would spend between \$0.4 million and \$0.6 million annually to manage and maintain the trail once the management plan has been completed, depending on how much of this effort would be borne by nonfederal entities such as volunteer organizations or state and local governments. This estimate is based on information provided by the NPS. For purposes of the estimate, CBO assumes that all required funding will be appropriated as necessary.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Deborah Reis. This estimate was approved by Robert A. Sunshine, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.