



SIGNAGE GUIDELINES

2026



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OVERVIEW

OVERVIEW

PURPOSE

Signage and wayfinding for outdoor recreation projects provide users with navigational guidance, enhance their experience, and increase access. They also offer essential information, including rules and regulations, guidance on etiquette, and create an identity with branding and visual continuity. A combination of signage, markings, maps, and technological aids can be added to support and improve the user experience.

The Rio Grande Trail (RGT) Signage Guidelines (Guide) are intended to guide signage for projects

along or connected to the Rio Grande Trail. The Rio Grande Trail requires appropriate signage that supports the user through their recreation experiences, enhances access, educates, and creates a strong brand and identity.

This document guides you through best practices to select appropriate sign types, follow graphic standards, and comply with sign standards and requirements that should be considered when developing projects for the Rio Grande Trail.

INTRODUCTION & APPLICABILITY

This Guide was created in 2025 to guide appropriate signage implementation for projects developed on the Rio Grande Trail. It includes guidance on sign types and selecting the appropriate sign for a specific purpose, graphic standards, and compliance with required federal sign standards. In areas where other sign standards exist those will govern. Links to applicable sign regulations are provided in *"Sign Standards Compliance" on page 19.*

This Guide applies to a wide range of projects and situations and should be considered before a project is developed. The information presented is intended for design purposes. Any details provided should not be interpreted as construction-ready, and concepts should be further reviewed and approved by qualified professionals before any building activities commence.

SIGNAGE CONSIDERATIONS

Signage is a crucial element for every quality outdoor recreation project, offering numerous benefits that enhance the overall experience for visitors. Comprehensive, high-quality signage is essential for effective navigation and orientation, helping individuals understand their geographic location and easily navigate complex environments. Signage guides visitors along the most efficient routes by providing visual cues and clear information, significantly improving their overall user experience by reducing stress and frustration.

Additionally, signage is critical in ensuring safety, particularly in emergencies where quick and accurate navigation is essential. It also enhances accessibility, enabling people with disabilities, including those with visual or mobility impairments, to navigate spaces independently and safely. Incorporating tactile and auditory elements in signage ensures inclusivity for all visitors.

Furthermore, wayfinding contributes to the brand image and aesthetics of an area, reinforcing a

positive perception of the associated agency or institution. Consistent and visually appealing signage enhances the overall design and helps maintain a professional and welcoming environment. Compliance with regulations and promoting etiquette are also key benefits, as signage can display rules, regulations, and messages that encourage responsible behavior. By adopting

nationally accepted messages like Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly, agencies can effectively communicate ethics and promote respectful behavior, thereby playing a significant role in minimizing the impact on natural, cultural, and social resources.

SIGNAGE FAMILY

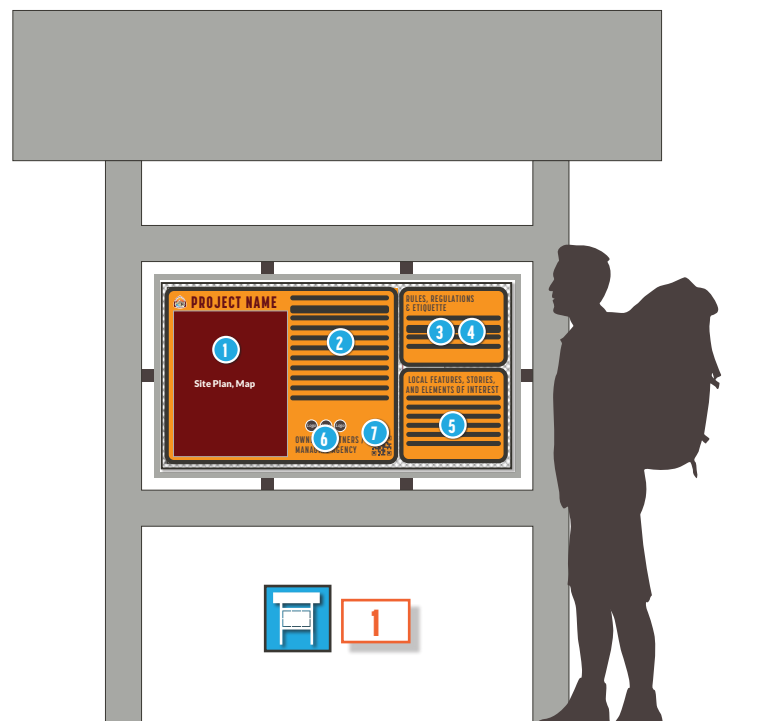
The sign family is a collection of signs that guide recreators and visitors on the Rio Grande Trail and establish a cohesive identity. Signs in a particular system should share common design elements, such as color schemes, typography, symbols, and layout styles. Some parts are consistent, and others will change depending on the location and jurisdiction. Each sign type fulfills a different purpose; together,

they enhance the user experience, increase access, offer important information, provide guidance on etiquette, and create an identity and visual continuity.

The following pages introduce members of the sign family and highlight the sign elements that should be included.

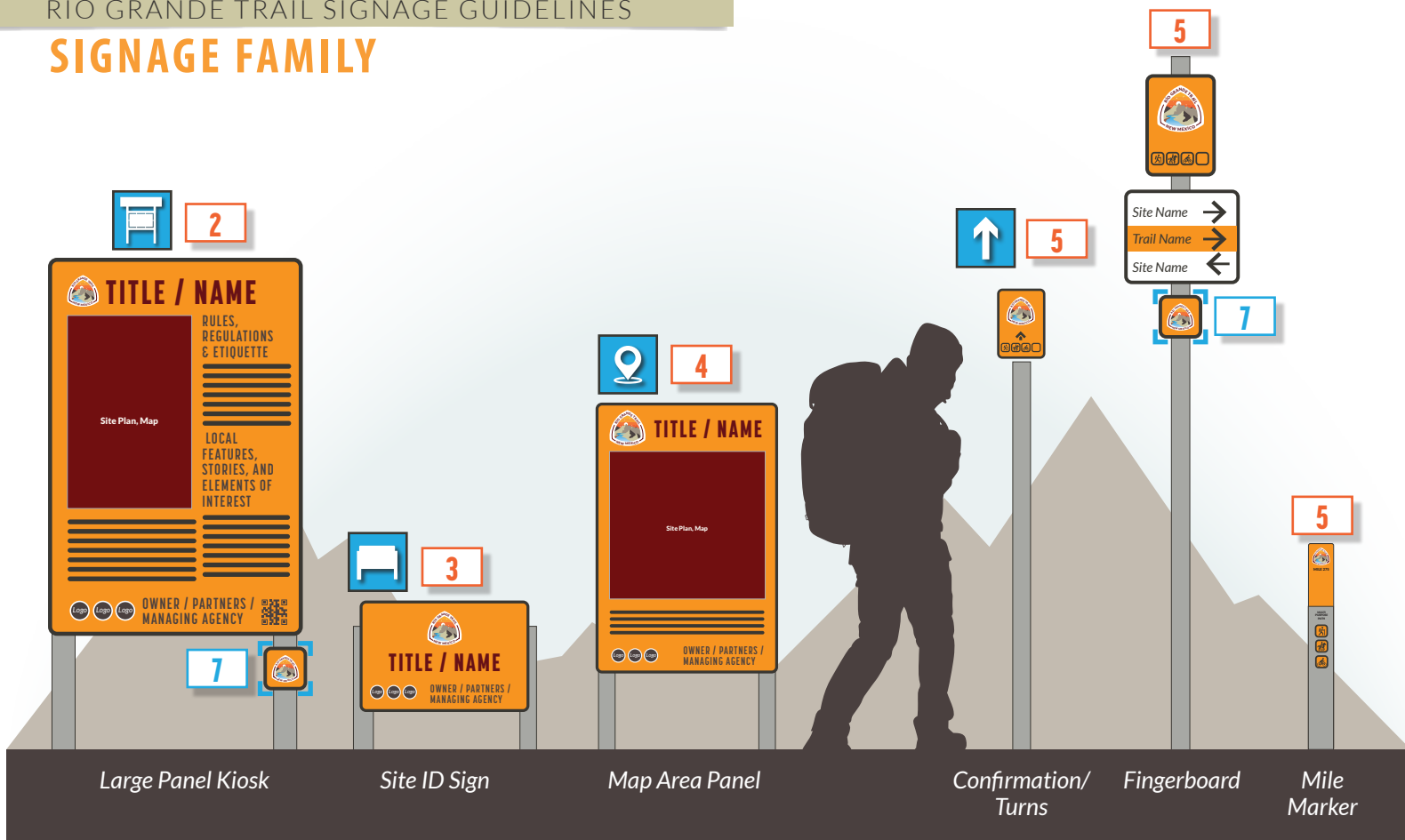
PRIMARY SIGNS

1 Sign Kiosk: The kiosk provides visitors with an overview of the open space, park, or trail system, its layout, points of interest, and rules and regulations. It also provides an opportunity to educate visitors about unique local features, stories, local history, and culture. The kiosk can be part of a structure or a standalone sign. It typically includes (1) an overview map, (2) general information related to the specific open space, park or trail, (3) rules and regulations, (4) etiquette, (5) educational topic(s), (6) owners, partners, managing agencies, and (7) a potential link to additional information.



Kiosk

SIGNAGE FAMILY



2 Large Panel: A large-panel kiosk is an acceptable alternative when there are constraints. This large metal sign face can accommodate all the information displayed on the kiosk without the external structure.

SECONDARY SIGNS

3 Site ID Signs: Site ID signs provide identification of parks and trails. They typically display less information than the kiosk, and include (1) the name of the trail or recreation area. Larger outdoor recreation areas with multiple access points may require multiple site ID signs. Trails will require identification signs at major trail access areas.

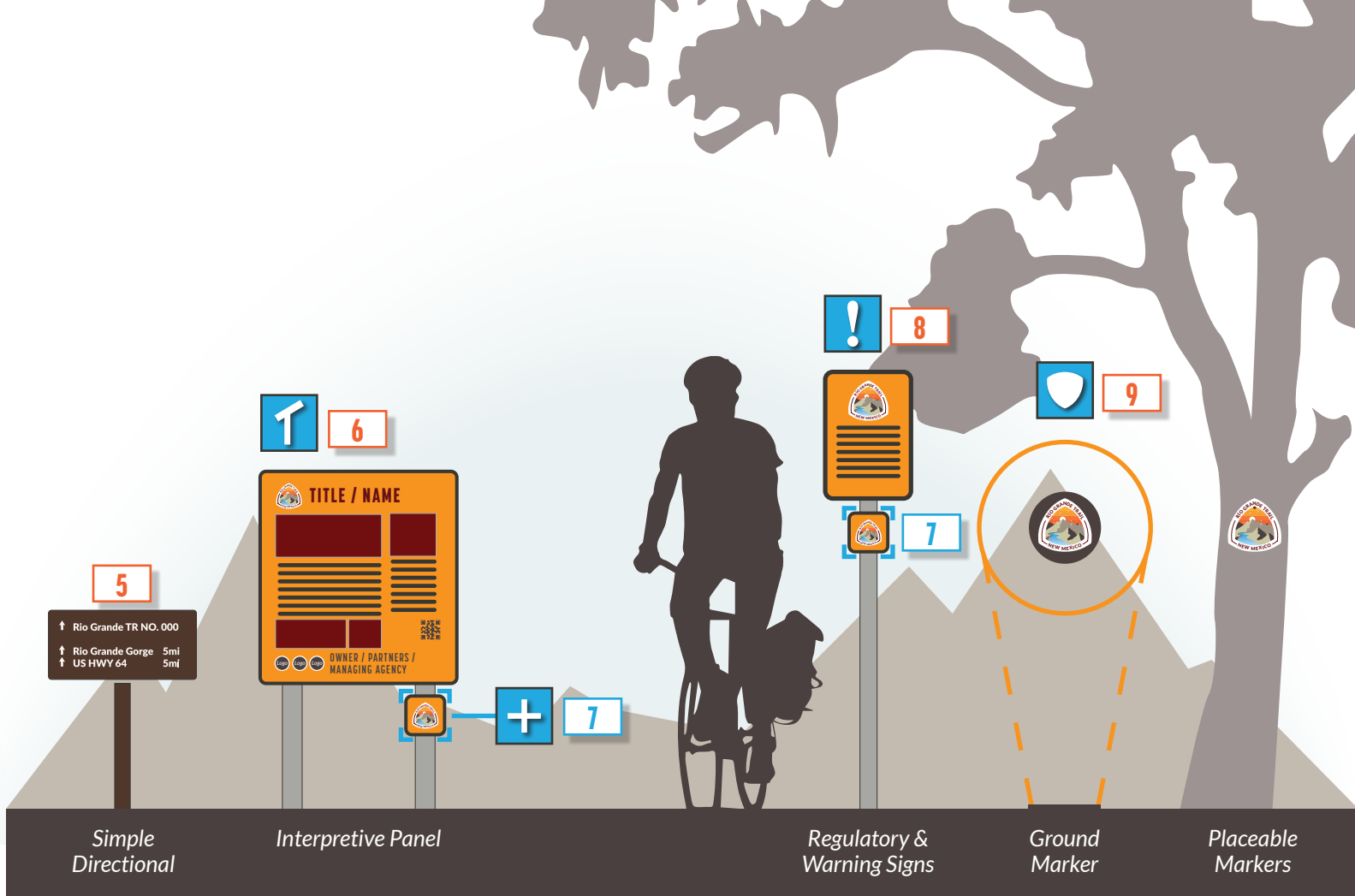
4 Map Area Signs: For orientation purposes, open space areas, parks, and trails should include a map(s) to help orient visitors and identify major destinations and points of interest. Map area signs typically include (1) the trail or recreation area name, the RGT logo, (2) a map of the area that highlights specific destinations and points of

interest, and (4) owners, partners, and managing agencies. Maps should be added at major access points and trailheads.

DIRECTIONAL & INTERPRETIVE SIGNS

5 Directional Signs: For orientation purposes, open space areas, parks, and trails should include directional signs at entrances, exits, and decision-making points and periodically to confirm a route. There is a variety of directional signage options, each with a unique use case. The largest sign in the family, the fingerboard, typically includes (1) permitted user groups, (2) guidance to specific destinations, and (3) the RGT logo. Smaller signs, like the confirmation sign, simple directional sign, or mile markers, may only include some of this information.

6 Interpretive Signs: Interpretive signs are informational displays designed to provide context, explanation, and understanding to visitors at a particular location. These signs aim to interpret



the significance of the surrounding environment, historical sites, or natural features, amongst others. They typically include (1) the trail or recreation area name, (2) information related to a specific natural, cultural, or site topic, history, and culture, (3) owners, partners, and managing agencies, and (4) a potential link to additional information.

PARTNER SIGNAGE

7 Partner Signage: Partner Signage is to be installed on existing signage structures along the trail. It can include markers, blazes, and directional signs. The primary purpose of partner signage is to inform and direct users that they are recreating on the RGT. Sizes and applications will vary depending on the existing sign structures. Refer to page 10 for more details.

REGULATORY & WARNING SIGNS

8 Regulatory & Warning Signs: Regulatory and Warning signs are vital in guiding and informing

users, ensuring safety, conservation, and the proper use of the specific outdoor recreation facility. These signs convey rules and regulations related to a place that must be followed to maintain order and protect the environment. Regulatory signs can be part of another sign or stand-alone. Many jurisdictions that the trail traverses have specific rules and regulations related to trail and open space use. To determine the correct requirements, contact the underlying land manager and owner and incorporate required and recommended rules and regulations on your signs.

MARKERS & BLAZES

9 Markers & Blazes: Markers and Blazes are small Rio Grande Trail logos that are versatile in their trailside placement. Where the trail surface is solid rock or paved, they may be embedded into the ground, and where the trail passes through forested areas they can be affixed to trees. These markers tell users that they are still following the correct path while reinforcing the identity of the trail.

SIGN PLACEMENT

SIGN PLACEMENT

Different projects will require different signs. The following outlines guidance on the types of signs that should be included and where they should be placed.



Each project will require a **Site Identification** sign. Site ID signs should be placed at a location visible to the approaching visitor when they first arrive.



For projects that encompass a system of trails, amenities, activities, and destinations, the inclusion of a **Sign Kiosk** or **Large Sign Panel** is highly recommended. These signs, when placed near the site's entrance and at decision-making points, intersections, and areas of visitor congregation, provide comprehensive project information and educational opportunities. They enhance the visitor's experience and understanding of the site, its history, natural environment, and cultural elements.



For trails, large parks, and projects located within a larger area, **directional** and **confirmation signs** are recommended. Directional signs should be used at decision-making points and where they help direct visitors to their destination. Confirmation signs should be used in between directional signs to confirm that users are still on the right path.










Interpretive signs play a vital role in any outdoor project. They are a powerful tool for educating visitors about the site's unique features, stories, history, and culture. When strategically located at significant points or related to natural/historic features, they foster a deeper connection between the visitor and the site. These signs can be paired with a sign kiosk or stand-alone, depending on the project's needs.



Regulatory & Warning signs should be placed in visible locations at access points and in areas where visitors make decisions. Specific regulation signs should be associated with the specific site and instance they are referencing. Specific regulation signs may include prohibitory signs, dog regulation signs, and boundary signs, amongst others.

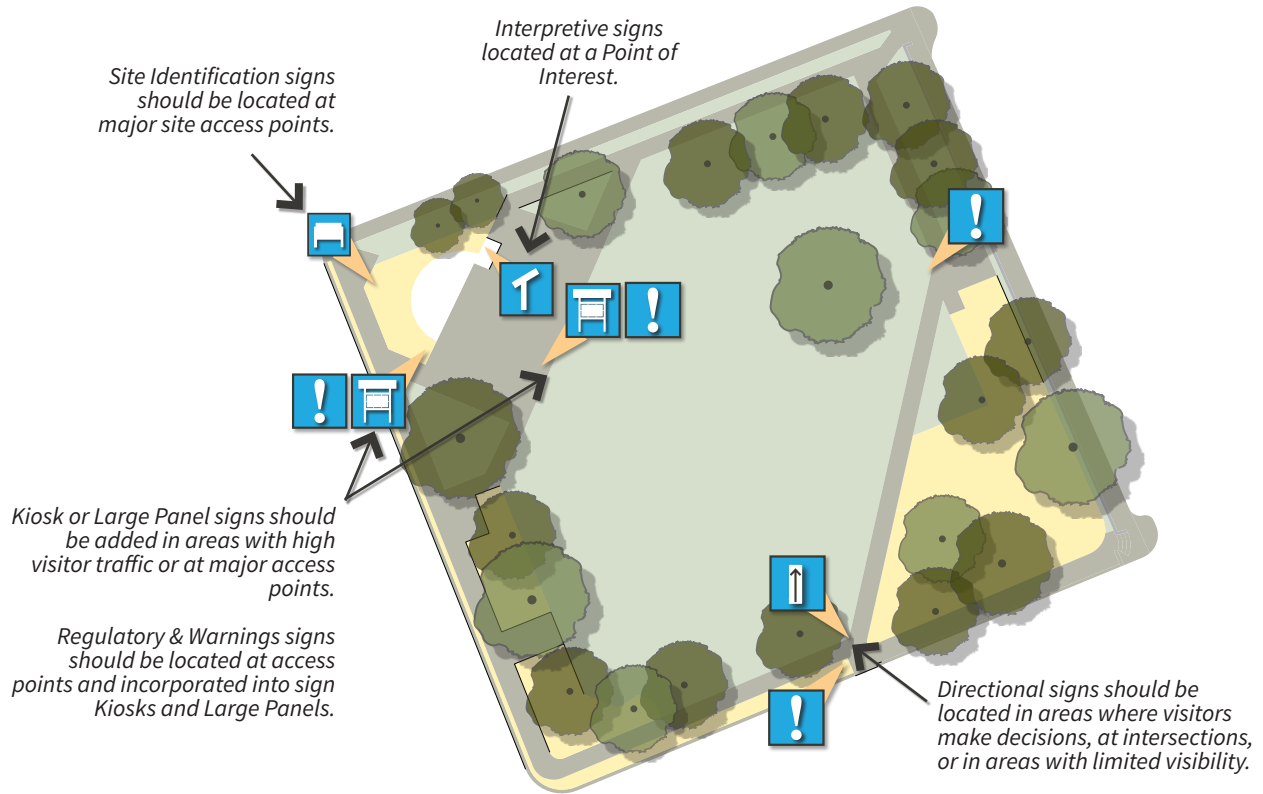


Markers & Blazes can be fixed to trees along the trail, or to posts. When applied to trees, markers should be placed approximately 5-7' above the ground on both sides of the tree. Markers should be installed with an inch of nail protruding to allow for tree growth. On posts, attach a marker 3" from the top on each trail-facing side. Use wooden Markers rather than plastic or aluminum when possible. In wilderness areas, non-wood markers are unacceptable.

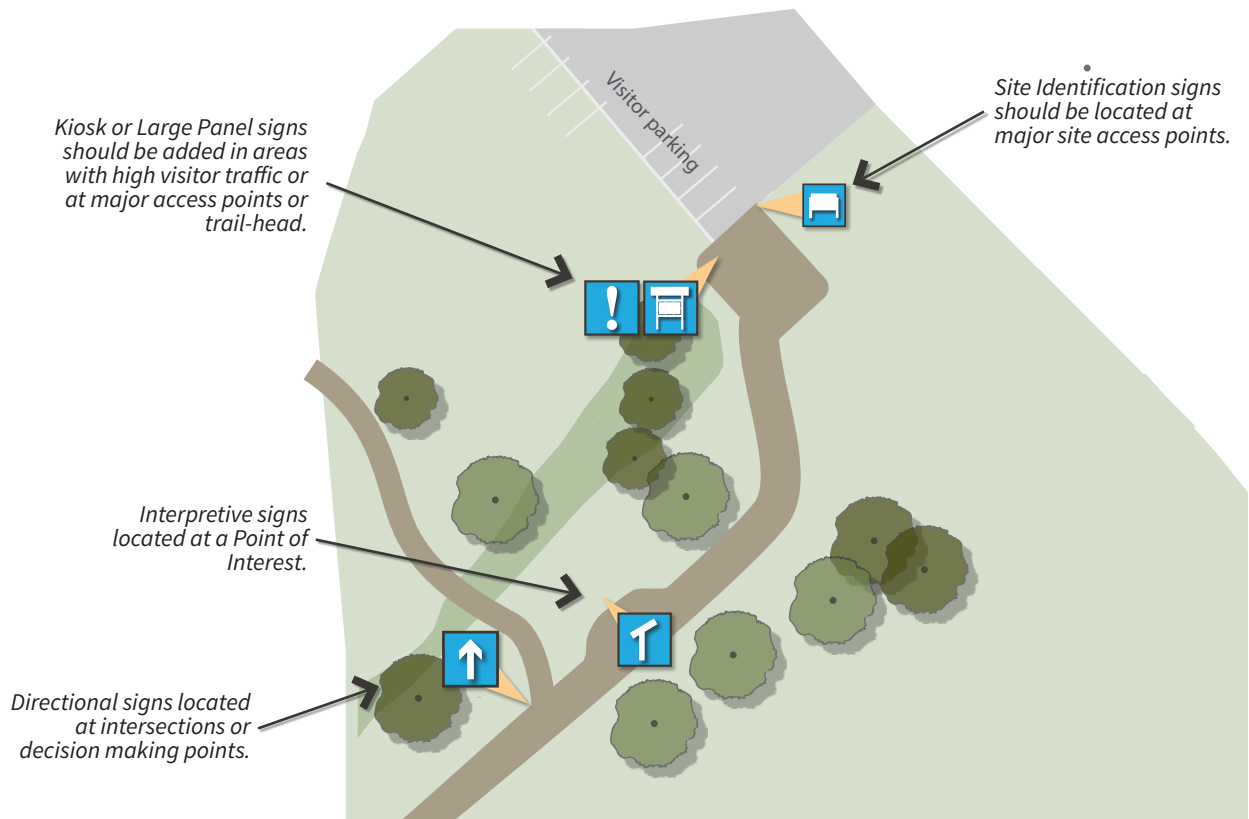
	 Kiosk/Large Panel	 Site Identification	 Map Area Sign	 Directional/Confirmation Directional	 Interpretive	 Regulatory & Warning Signs	 Markers & Blazes
Main Access Points	☑	☑				☑	
Trailhead/High Traffic Area	☑		☑	☑	☑	☑	
Point of Interest			☑	☑	☑	☑	
Along a Trail				☑		☑	☑
Roadways				☑			
Adjacent Trails				☑			
Junction/ Intersection/ Major Decision Making Point			☑	☑		☑	

SIGN PLACEMENT

SIGN PLACEMENT - PARKS & OPEN SPACE AREAS



SIGN PLACEMENT - TRAILS



GRAPHIC STANDARDS

The three fundamental components for designing a Rio Grande Trail sign's style are its color palette, typography, and logos. If your project or organization already has established style guidelines for other materials, it is advisable to maintain consistency by applying the same style to your signage.

In the absence of existing style guidelines, developing signage presents an excellent opportunity to establish a distinctive visual identity for your project. Evaluate the key characteristics of your project and select colors and fonts that represent these attributes effectively.

CURRENT LOGO

The current Rio Grande Trail logo used on all documents, merchandise, throughout the wayfinding system, and on the Rio Grande Trail Website.



GRAPHIC STANDARDS

COLOR PALETTE

Wayfinding System Colors

The primary colors used throughout the wayfinding system



CMYK: 0,49,98,0	CMYK: 31,100,99,44	CMYK: 61,63,60,46	CMYK: 0,0,11,92	CMYK: 0,0,0,0	CMYK: 0,0,0,100
RGB: 247, 149, 33	RGB: 114, 17, 18	RGB: 74, 64, 63	RGB: 56, 55, 51	RGB: 255, 255, 255	RGB: 0, 0, 0

Logo Colors

The set of colors used in the official Rio Grande Trail Logo and related branding graphics



CMYK: 21,15,39,0	CMYK: 39,37,47,3	CMYK: 29,66,75,16	CMYK: 61,63,60,46	CMYK: 31,100,99,44	CMYK: 1,75,89,0	CMYK: 0,67,86,0	CMYK: 0,45,89,0	CMYK: 0,36,91,0	CMYK: 0,0,0,0	CMYK: >71,16,0,0
RGB: 204,200,164	RGB: 158,148,133	RGB: 160,96,71	RGB: 74,64,63	RGB: 114,17,18	RGB: 239,100,51	RGB: 244,118,57	RGB: 249,158,54	RGB: 250,174,49	RGB: 255,255,255	RGB: >34,168,224

TYPEFACE

LATO BLACK
The quick brown
fox jumps over
the lazy dog.
0123456789!?!#&

LATO BLACK
The quick brown
fox jumps over
the lazy dog.
0123456789!?!#&

LATO BLACK
The quick brown
fox jumps over
the lazy dog.
0123456789!?!#&

Lato Hairline

Hairline Italic

Lato Light

Light Italic

Lato Bold

Bold Italic



CMYK: 0,0,0,0
RGB: 255, 255, 255



CMYK: 31,100,99,44
RGB: 114,17,18



CMYK: 61,63,60,46
RGB: 74,64,63



CMYK: 0,0,0,100
RGB: 0, 0, 0

Lato Black is the sole font to be used everywhere in the RGT sign system. It is a modern sans serif set of characters that is highly legible. The Lato typeface includes a variety of styles and weights. Text on signage should be displayed in the colors shown above, these colors all contrast well with their backgrounds, enhancing accessibility and legibility while continuing to convey the developed signage brand. When lettering is applied to darker colored signs, text should be printed in white.

LEGIBILITY

The general rule is that 1 inch of letter height provides 10 feet of readability for optimal legibility for signage. This means that letters 3 inches tall are best read from 30 feet away, ensuring that your signage makes a strong impact. A sign visibility chart is recommended to achieve the best results, as it eliminates the need to memorize specifics and provides clear guidance.

Several factors influence sign visibility, including font style, color, white space, and placement. Bold fonts are easier to read from a distance than thinner, decorative styles. High-contrast color schemes improve readability, such as light text on a dark background. Adequate white space around the text helps it stand out, with a recommended 40/60 ratio between copy area and whitespace. The table below showcases ideal text height at various distances. To ensure legibility, and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), these guidelines should be followed.

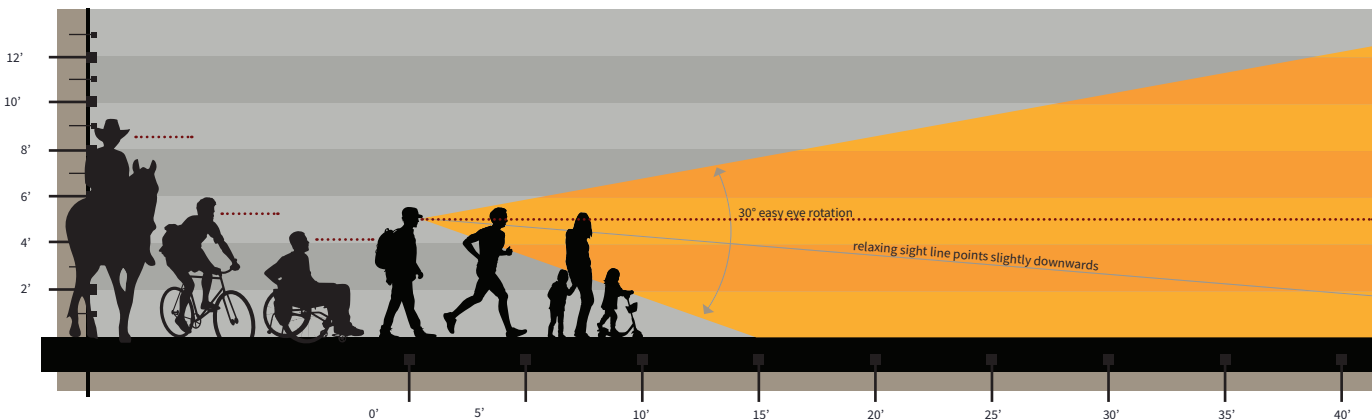


Distance From (Feet)	2.5	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65
Cap Letter Height (Inch)	.25	.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4	4.5	5	5.5	6	6.5

VISIBILITY

The field of view encompasses the visible area a visitor can see when scanning their surroundings, while the line of sight refers to what is directly in a visitor's view as they navigate a site. Signs should be strategically placed within the field of view, directly ahead of visitors on their path of travel, ensuring easy detection and readability.

Improperly positioned signs—too high, too low, or obstructed—can be overlooked by visitors casually surveying their environment. To ensure visibility, signs must be placed within the user's field of view and be accessible to various types of visitors, including hikers, cyclists, equestrians, drivers, and individuals with impairments.



GRAPHIC STANDARDS

GRAMMAR AND TRANSLATION

Multilingual translation

English will be the primary language applied on signage, where text is used. While it is important to provide bilingual messages (English and Spanish) wherever possible in areas heavily used by non-English speaking populations, facility names and other formal place names, especially on ‘Site Identification’ signs and markers, should not be translated as it presents a safety problem with emergency response services. For all message translations, signs should follow and comply with any signage requirements and guidelines for the sign’s respective jurisdiction.

Where translations are present, always have the English messages translated by a professional translator and have the translated text back translated to ensure consistency in the intended signage content meaning. For additional guidance on Spanish Style Guide, visit [The National Parks Service Spanish Style Guide](#)

Indigenous placenames are encouraged on ‘Interpretive Signs’ only if deemed appropriate or approved by local Tribal community leaders. This content celebrates and acknowledges local history and cultural information along the Rio Grande Trail. Tribal community engagement and research are highly encouraged to better understand indigenous language protocols and to avoid disclosing culturally sensitive information. The New Mexico Secretary of the State’s Office and Native American Election Information Program details the various languages for each of the 23 NM Federally Recognized Tribes ([Found Here](#)). Refer to the “Land Acknowledgement Guide” and “Tribal Engagement Process” section of these guidelines for more details on engaging with local Tribal communities.

Font styles for languages

Where multiple languages are present, sign messages should be visually distinguishable by utilizing different typeface styles for the primary English text and secondary language text. Lato Regular and Lato Bold shall be applied exclusively for English messages. Lato Italic and Bold Italic shall be used exclusively for Spanish messages and other languages. Lato Regular can be used in special applications for ADA tactile lettering and complex sign layouts.

SIGN TYPE LOCATIONS GUIDANCE

Trail signage placement guidance is crucial for several reasons, particularly for ensuring safety, navigation, and an enhanced outdoor experience for trail users. Here are some key points highlighting the importance of proper trail signage placement:

ROW Owner	Applicable Signage Standards
National Parks Service (NPS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>National Parks Service UniGuide</u> • <u>Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)</u>
United States Forest Service (USFS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>US Forest Service Sign Installation Guide</u> • <u>Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)</u>
Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)</u>
Bureau of Land Management (BLM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>BLM National Sign Handbook</u> • <u>Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)</u>
Department of Transportation (NMDOT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)</u> • <u>New Mexico Administrative Code (NMAC)</u> • <u>2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design</u>
County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Depends on ROW Jurisdiction</i>
Other (Private)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Depends on ROW Jurisdiction</i>

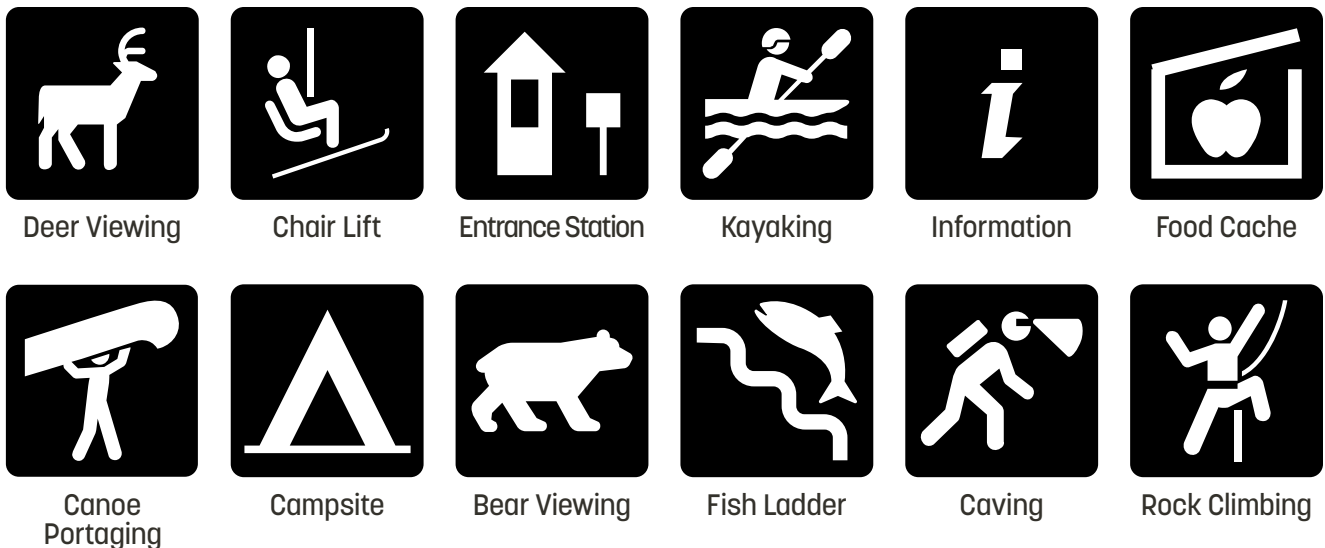
GRAPHIC STANDARDS

SYMBOLOLOGY

Universally recognizable symbols (icons or pictograms) are an essential wayfinding element. Icons and pictograms are essential for signage in outdoor recreation projects because they communicate information quickly and effectively. They transcend language barriers, making them easily understood by a diverse audience, including non-native speakers and international visitors. Visual symbols can be processed faster than text, allowing users to grasp important information at a glance, which is particularly useful in dynamic outdoor environments where quick decision-making is crucial.







Distilling complex information into simple, easily recognizable images, icons, and pictograms reduces cognitive load and enhances comprehension for users of all ages and literacy levels. Standardized icons create a uniform visual language, ensuring consistent messaging across signs and locations. Additionally, well-designed icons contribute to the overall aesthetic of the signage, enhance visual appeal, and integrate seamlessly with the natural environment. They also occupy less space than text, allowing for more concise use of the signage area. Most importantly, clear and immediate communication of warnings and guidelines through icons and pictograms improves safety by ensuring critical information is easily noticeable and understood. [The National Parks' Map Symbols](#) are free and in the public domain, with hundreds of symbols.

EXCERPT FROM THE NATIONAL PARKS SYMBOLS



SIGN FACE COMPONENTS

The sign face pertains to the printed sign panel. Typically, this includes the name and logo of the open space, park, or trail. Directional signs may incorporate directional guidance, distances, and destination information. The sign kiosk, being the most intricate component, is examined in greater detail in this section. Below is an overview of signage elements and the essential components that should be included.

	 Kiosk/Large Panel	 Site Identification	 Map Area Sign	 Directional	 Interpretive	 Regulatory & Warning
Project Logo/Name	✔	✔	✔		✔	
Land Acknowledgment	✔				✔	
Project Map	✔		✔			
Project Overview/Description	✔					
Directional Information	✔		✔	✔		
Owners, partners, and managing agencies	✔	✔	✔		✔	✔
Rules & Regulations	✔		✔		✔	✔
Trail Etiquette	✔		✔	✔		

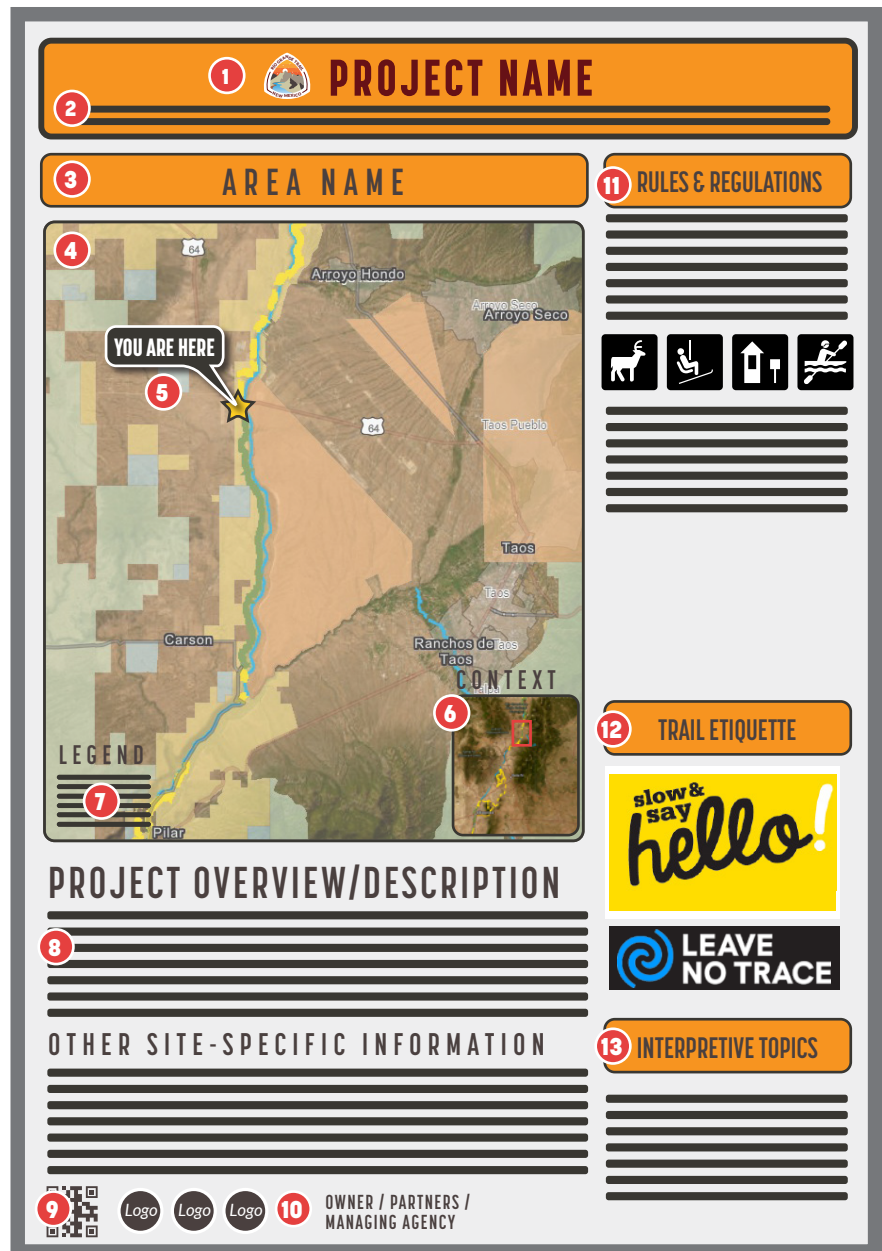
- ✔ = Element Always to include
- ✔ = Element to include on a case by case basis

GRAPHIC STANDARDS

The sign kiosk is an example that includes several different sign components. The components may differ depending on the sign's location, the project scope, and the land manager/landowner. The list below highlights a version that includes a sample set of sign components.

The number and type of components are a good starting point to provide navigational, educational, and etiquette guidance on a project for a sign kiosk.

- 1 Project Name + Logo
- 2 Land Acknowledgment
- 3 Area Name
- 4 Map
- 5 "You Are Here" Icon
- 6 Context Map with the Project Area Highlighted
- 7 Legend of map element
- 8 General Project Overview/Description and other Site-Specific Information
- 9 QR Code to Link to Project Website
- 10 Owners, partners, and managing agencies
- 11 Rules & Regulations
- 12 Trail Etiquette, may include:
 - *Slow & Say Hello* (<https://safetrailsmarin.org/>)
 - *Leave No Trace Trail* (<https://int.org/why/7-principles/>)
 - *Cultural Artifacts Belong*
- 13 Interpretive topic(s)



SIGN STANDARDS COMPLIANCE

AGENCY STANDARDS

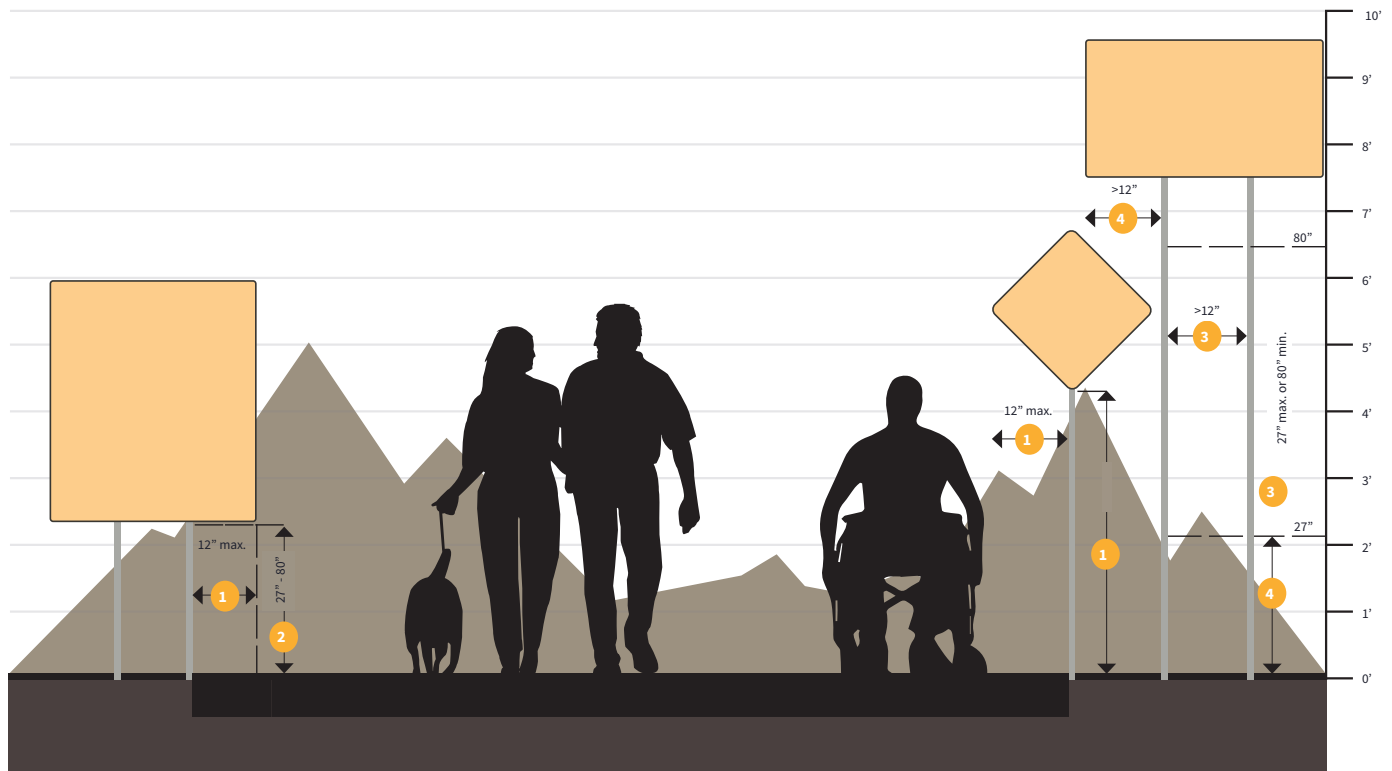
Many agencies and land managers have their own signage guidelines. If your project is on land owned or managed by an agency, your project's signage must follow their guidelines. All signs must also conform to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) linked below, regardless of location. The following table outlines agency requirements and links to the standards, where available. The following pages also detail a few sign requirements. All projects should follow the applicable guidelines and the guidelines outlined in this document. In the following pages we also outline a few selected federal requirements to provide additional guidance.

Agency	Description	Link
Department of Justice (DOJ) / United States Access Board	Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards for Accessible Design: These standards outline requirements for accessible signage in public accommodations and commercial facilities, including specifications for height, contrast, and tactile elements.	https://www.ada.gov/law-and-regs/design-standards/2010-stds/
Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)	Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD): The MUTCD defines the standards for signs, signals, and pavement markings on all public roads and highways. It includes guidelines for sign design, placement, and maintenance to ensure consistent and clear communication for road users. Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center (PBIC) Guide: This guide provides best practices for pedestrian and bicycle wayfinding signage, including design principles, placement strategies, and case studies to improve non-motorized transportation networks.	https://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/pdfs/11th_Edition/mutcd11thedition.pdf https://highways.dot.gov/sites/fhwa.dot.gov/files/2022-06/fhwasa09025.pdf
General Services Administration (GSA)	Federal Facilities Signage Guidelines: These guidelines provide standards for signage in federal buildings and facilities, focusing on accessibility, readability, and uniformity to enhance navigation and wayfinding.	
United States Access Board	Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) Standards: The ABA Standards apply to facilities designed, built, altered, or leased with federal funds. They include requirements for signage that ensures accessibility for people with disabilities, such as tactile characters and Braille.	https://www.access-board.gov/files/aba/ABAstandards.pdf
National Park Service (NPS)	National Park Service (NPS) Sign Program: The NPS Sign Program provides guidelines for signage in national parks, focusing on enhancing visitor experience through consistent and clear wayfinding, interpretive signs, and regulatory signs.	https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online-books/npsg/sign_manual_1988.pdf https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1453/road-signs.htm https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1453/pedestrian-signs.htm
United States Forest Service (USFS)	Forest Service Sign and Poster Guidelines: These guidelines cover the design, placement, and maintenance of signs in national forests, emphasizing safety, information dissemination, and compliance with environmental and aesthetic standards.	https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprd3810021.pdf https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5335847.pdf
Bureau of Land Management (BLM)	Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Sign Handbook: The BLM Sign Handbook offers comprehensive guidance on the design and installation of signs on BLM-managed lands, focusing on wayfinding, regulatory, and interpretive signage.	https://www.blm.gov/sites/default/files/documents/files/NationalSignHandbook16_0.pdf

SIGN STANDARDS COMPLIANCE

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT STANDARDS

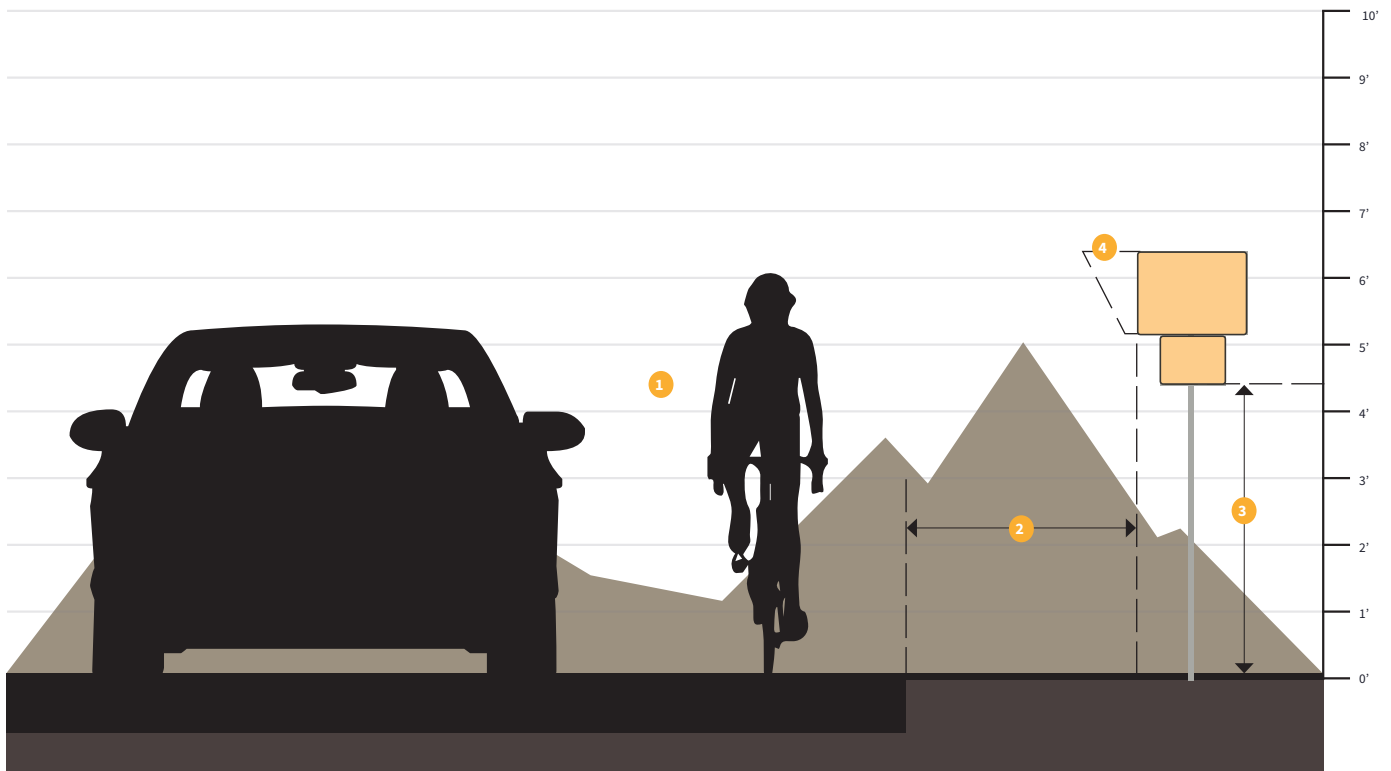
Complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act requirements is required on all projects. It ensures that individuals with disabilities are accommodated in their outdoor recreation experiences and helps prevent discrimination. The following sign standards apply to all multi-use or pedestrian facilities.



- 1 Freestanding signs mounted on either one or two posts have a maximum overhang of 12 inches from the side of the post into any circulation pathways if the object's bottom edge is elevated between 27" to 80" above the floor level or ground.
- 2 Where a sign is mounted on two posts, and the clear distance between the posts is less than 12", the lowest edge of the sign must be between 27" and 80" above the ground.
- 3 Where a sign is mounted on two posts, and the clear distance between the posts is greater than 12", the lowest edge of such sign is 27 inches maximum or 80 inches minimum above the finish floor or ground.
- 4 The lowest edge of a protruding post-mounted sign must be elevated by a minimum of 80" unless guardrails with a maximum clearance of 27" are provided.

MUTCD STANDARDS

On and along all public roads, signs must comply with MUTCD standards, as the state adopted them. The following standards apply to all signs along facilities owned and managed by NMDOT.



1 Where signs serve bicyclists and other road users, vertical mounting height and lateral placement should follow the guidelines below.

2 For post-mounted signs, the minimum lateral offset should be 12 feet from the edge of the traveled way. If a shoulder wider than 6 feet exists, the minimum lateral offset for post-mounted signs should be 6' from the edge of the shoulder. On conventional roads where it is impractical to locate a sign with the lateral offset, a lateral offset of at least 2 feet may be used. A lateral offset of at least 1' from the face of the curb may be used in business, commercial, or residential areas where sidewalk width is limited or where existing poles are close to the curb.

3 In business or residence districts, where parking or pedestrian movements are common, it's crucial to maintain a clearance of at least 7 feet to the bottom of the sign. This ensures safety and smooth traffic flow.

4 Sign shapes depend on the type: Regulatory and warning signs are rectangular, while Recreational, cultural interest, Area, and National Forest Route series signs are trapezoidal.

PARTNER SIGNAGE

PARTNER SIGNAGE

Many segments of the Rio Grande Trail exist on or are planned for implementation on lands under the ownership of partner agencies including the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), and the Department of the Interior (DOI) among others. With this variety of ownership, the majority of Rio Grande Trail (RGT) signage will be partner signage. The Rio Grande Trail Logo, branding, and associated signage can be deployed in several ways:

1. **The RGT Logo or RGT Signage can be affixed to existing signage structures**
2. **The RGT Logo and/or RGT Signage can be included in the design of new signage**

PARTNER SIGNAGE PROCESS

The following section outlines a signage procurement process for the Rio Grande Trail utilizing guidelines from the Bureau of Land Management's [*National Sign Handbook*](#).

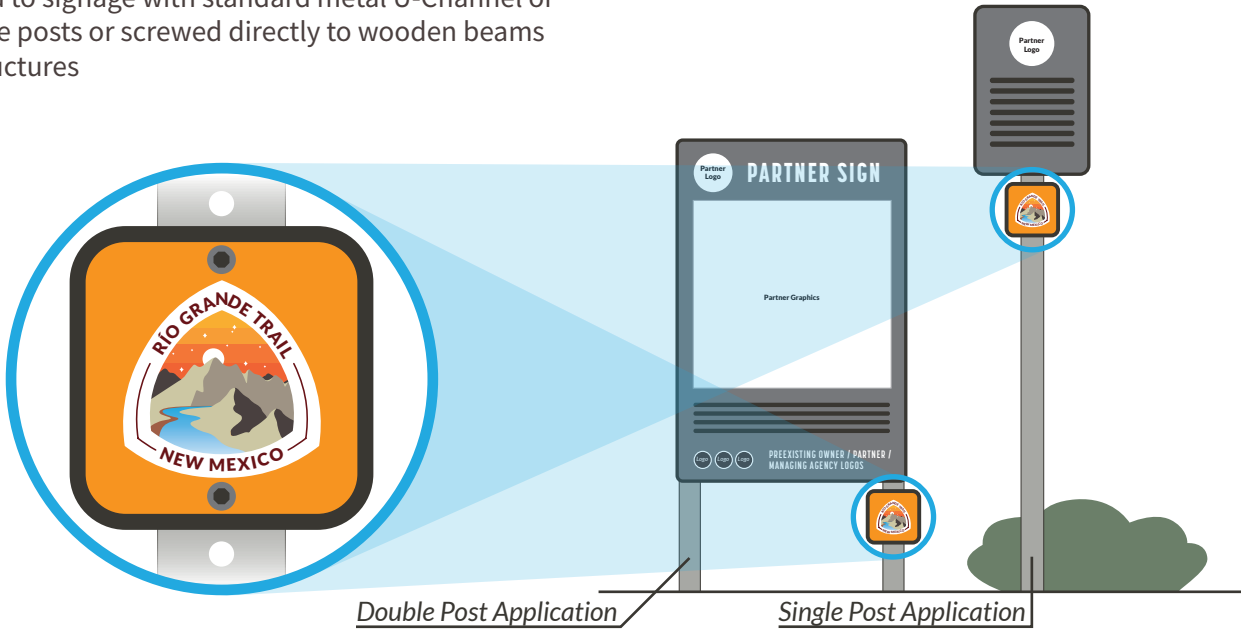
1. **Prioritization:** Identify and focus on the most essential signage needs, prioritizing installation in the most frequently used or visible sections of the trail first. Emphasize signs that can be installed promptly and efficiently to ensure that available funds and labor are used effectively.
2. **Coordination:** Work collaboratively with neighboring federal, state, local, and tribal agencies to identify opportunities for signage that benefits all parties and to ensure that any necessary permits are coordinated across jurisdictions.
3. **Design:** Work with all involved parties to design the signage. Ensure adherence to ADA, MUTCD, and any other applicable standards. Closely inspect all elements (messaging, spelling, typography, symbology, dimensions, shape, sizing, placement, and color) of the design before finalizing.
4. **Partnering:** Seek grant funding and explore new and existing partnerships to help offset costs and labor needs. Involve local organizations, volunteer groups, and trail crews that might be able to contribute funding, materials, or installation support.
5. **Fabrication:** Correspond with local fabricators to confirm their ability to produce signage that meets agreed-upon standards and design requirements. Establish pricing agreements and proceed with orders.

PARTNER SIGNAGE OPTIONS

Rio Grande Trail partner signage is designed to be both adaptable to agency needs and unified in appearance, ensuring a consistent look along the trail. Flexible partner signage options are detailed here:

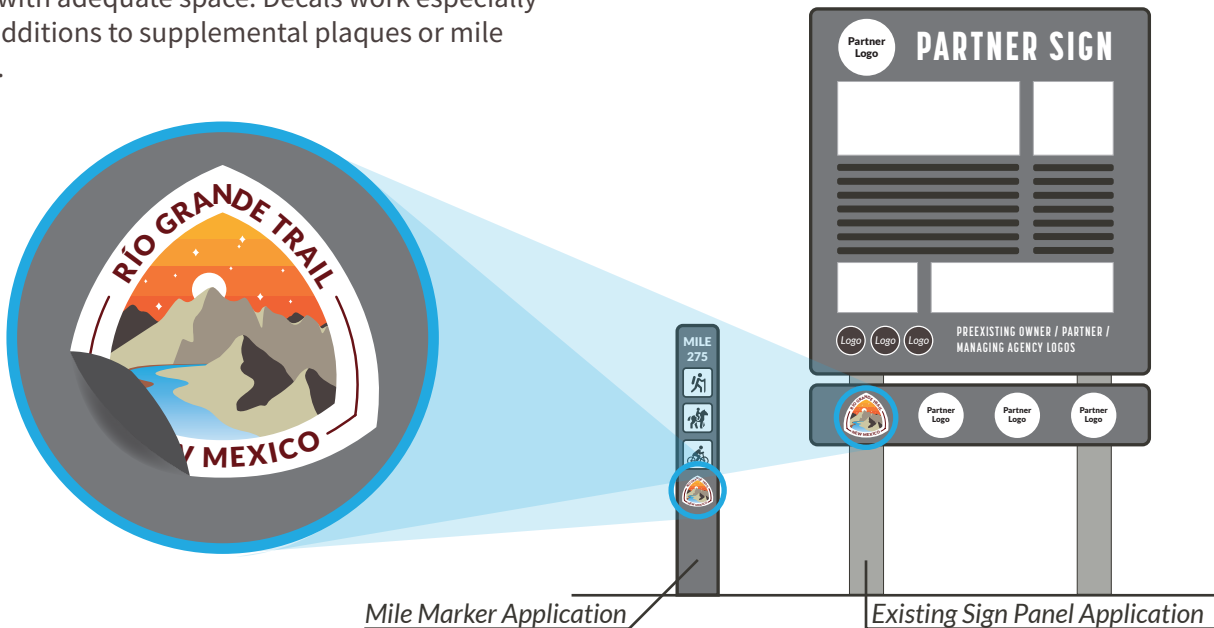
RGT Marker

Bolted to signage with standard metal U-Channel or Square posts or screwed directly to wooden beams or structures



Stickers/Decals

Applied to any existing metal/fiberglass partner signage with adequate space. Decals work especially well as additions to supplemental plaques or mile markers.



PARTNER SIGNAGE

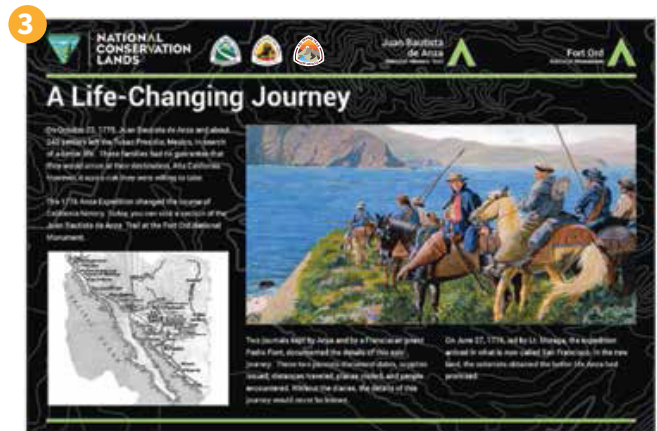
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT (BLM)

Additions to Existing Signage

The Rio Grande Trail logo can be printed as a decal and affixed to the faces of existing signage where there is available space. BLM Destination Signs (1) are often accompanied by a Supplemental Plaque (2) on which such decals could be placed. Smaller decals might also be pasted to the faces of other signs that bear national markers and partner emblems, such as the National Conservation Lands Panel (3). In cases where there is no existing panel or space for the Rio Grande Trail logo to be attached, a marker could be attached directly to a bare structural element such as a post or pole.

Implementation on New Signage

Upon the installation of new signage, or replacement of old signage within the bounds of Bureau of Land Management lands, new signs displaying the Rio Grande Trail Logo could be used. Reprinting Supplemental Plaques to include the RGT logo and affixing new markers to other existing BLM signs could be a low cost strategy for implementing RGT signage on BLM lands.



NATIONAL PARKS SERVICE (NPS) & US FOREST SERVICE (USFS)

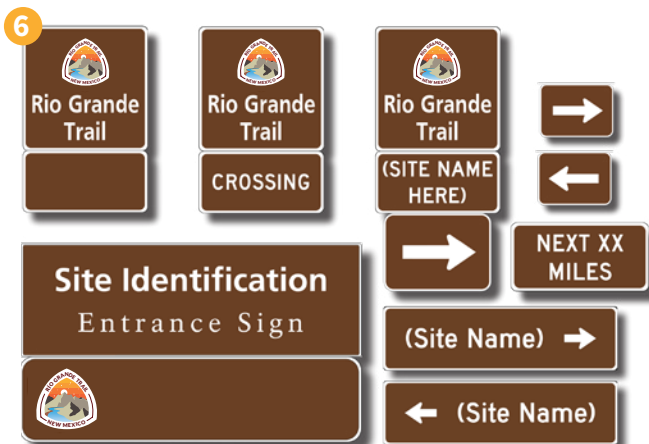
Additions to Existing Signage

In many cases, a small marker (4) can be applied to existing National Parks Service and US Forest Service signage. On wooden signage, markers could be screwed directly into sign backings or posts (5), whereas on metal signage structures, they could be bolted to the structure.



Implementation on New Signage

Upon the installation of new signage, or replacement of old signage within the bounds of NPS or USFS lands, new signs displaying the Rio Grande Trail Logo, new signs displaying the Rio Grande Trail Logo could be used. Below are mockups of signs from the National Parks Service's *Family of Road Signs* (6) with RGT branding.



LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT GUIDE

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT GUIDE

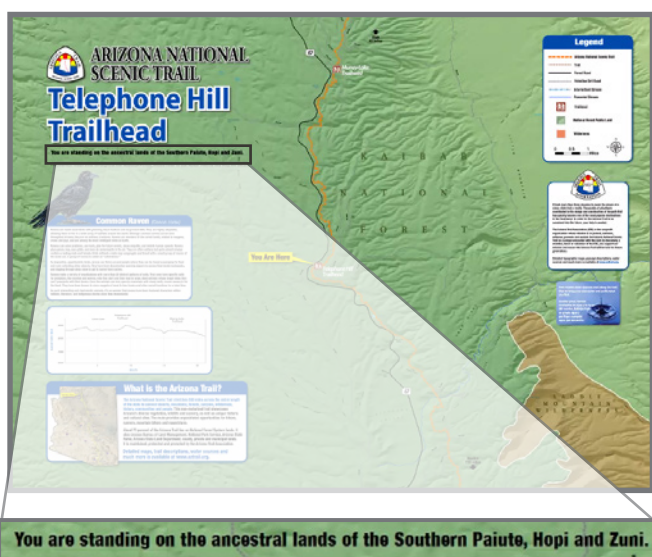
RESOURCES

Land Acknowledgments are statements used to acknowledge the ancestral territory and history of the lands we live, work, and recreate. They are also used to engage in a process of reconciliation and recognition of indigenous lands. Regardless of today's political borders and boundaries, all land is Indigenous land. The following table outlines resources and links to guidelines for creating appropriate land acknowledgments using a recommended four-step process: **1 Research**, **2 Identify**, **3 Outreach**, and **4 Draft**. All projects should follow the guidelines outlined in this document to incorporate an appropriate Land Acknowledgment into their signs. The table below outlines resources that can be utilized to create the Land Acknowledgment.

Step	Agency	Description	Link
1	National Congress of American Indians (NCAI)	Tribal Nations and the United States: An Introduction: The guide developed by NCAI seeks to provide a basic overview of tribal governance's history and underlying principles. It also provides introductory information about tribal governments and American Indian and Alaska Native people today.	https://archive.ncai.org/about-tribes
1	U.S. Department of Arts and Culture (USDAC)	Honor Native Land: A Guide and Call to Acknowledgment: Learn more about this history and the contemporary context of Native groups in your region. Search for books, articles, people, and organizations that you can learn more about and access the #HonorNativeLand Resource Pack.	https://usdac.us/nativeland
1	United Nations (UN)	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: The United States was one of four nations to vote against the declaration when it was first adopted in 2007. It was the last of the four to reverse that in 2010.	https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf
2	Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)	Tribal Leadership Directory: This interactive map directory resource provides up-to-date tribal land areas and contact information for each federally recognized tribe.	https://biamaps.geoplatform.gov/Tribal-Leaders-Directory/
2	Native Land Digital	Native Land Digital Map: Native Land is a resource for learning more about Indigenous territories, languages, lands, and ways of life.	https://native-land.ca/
3	New Mexico Indian Affairs Department (NM IAD)	Nations, Pueblos & Tribes: This resource provides contact information for each of the twenty-three 23 tribes in New Mexico. This resource also includes contact information for Pueblo organizations, including the All Pueblo Council of Governors, Five Sandoval Indian Pueblos, and Eight Northern Indian Pueblos Council. If possible, engage with representatives of the specific Tribe or Nation and ask how they would like to be represented.	https://biamaps.geoplatform.gov/Tribal-Leaders-Directory/
3	Local Tribal Institutions and Cultural Organizations	Additional outreach should be initiated to local tribal institutions and cultural organizations for input on land acknowledgments.	

Step	Agency	Description	Link
4	Statements Examples	<p>Land acknowledgments can vary in length depending on the space available on a sign. There is no exact script we are recommending for drafting land acknowledgments, and acknowledgments change based on location. Below are several examples of short and long-version statements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “We acknowledge that we are on the traditional land of the _____ People.” <p>Often, statements specifically honor elders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “We acknowledge that this is the traditional lands of the _____ People, and we honor the elders both past and present.” <p>Some allude to the caring, reciprocal relationship with land:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “We respectfully acknowledge the _____ People, who have stewarded this land throughout the generations.” <p>Acknowledgments may also make explicit mention of the occupied, unceded nature of the territory in which a gathering is taking place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “We acknowledge that the land on which we gather is the occupied/unceded/ seized territory of the _____ People.” - “I would like to begin by acknowledging that we are in _____, the ancestral and unceded territory of the _____ People.” 	<p>https://www.neefusa.org/guide-indigenous-land-acknowledgment</p>
4	U.S. Department of Arts and Culture (USDAC)	<p>A Guide to Indigenous Land Acknowledgment: This guide provides suggested steps to acknowledging traditional land.</p>	<p>https://www.neefusa.org/guide-indigenous-land-acknowledgment</p>

EXAMPLE TRAIL SIGNAGE STATEMENTS



For more details, visit <https://aztrail.org/the-trail/history/>.

TRIBAL ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

The Rio Grande Trail Signs should be developed in consultation with local Tribal representatives and community leaders. Tribal outreach efforts involve requesting consultation and collaboration from tribal entities on trail signage elements and content including 1) Land Acknowledgements, 2) Cultural Resources and Indigenous Placenames, and 3) Interpretive Signs.

TRIBAL COMMUNITIES CORE VALUES

In outreach, communication, and engagement strategies with Tribal Communities, it is crucial to consider and internalize several key elements. First and foremost, Tribes and Pueblos are sovereign nations and the original inhabitants of this state. Their culture and governance embody the following core values:

- *Self-Determination and Sovereignty*
- *Respect*
- *Community & Generations*
- *Culture*
- *Stewardship and Environmental Sustainability*
- *Resiliency*

ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

It is important that Government to Tribal Government interactions include formal invitations for review and feedback, as befits a sovereign entity. Emails and mailed correspondence are to be directed to leadership, tribal administration, and respective tribal departments. An official state entity should initiate discussions. Consultants can follow-up with the tribal leadership on behalf of the state or entity developing and installing the signage. Communications should be initiated for all signage elements and content that include 1) Land Acknowledgements, 2) Cultural Resources and Indigenous Placenames, and 3) Interpretive Signs.

OUTREACH PROTOCOLS

For certain sign types and content, it is essential to engage Tribal Communities and Indigenous Organizations to solicit input and meaningful feedback. Three stakeholder tiers have been identified for the engagement process on interpretive content for signage. Tier 1 consists of Tribal Governance organizations and Liaisons, Tier 2 includes individual Tribal Governments in close proximity to the trail and Rio Grande, and Tier 3 encompasses individual Tribal Governments within the State of New Mexico that hold significant cultural interests related to the areas traversed by the trail.

Tier 1 is recommended for primary engagement and communication. Tier 1 and Tier 2 are recommended for site specific placenames, cultural resources and interpretive content directly associated with the Rio Grande Trail. Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 are recommended for all signage elements and content more broadly referencing all Pueblos, Tribal Nations, and/or Indigenous land acknowledgement messages.

TIER #1 - TRIBAL ORGANIZATIONS AND LIAISONS

- *New Mexico Department of Indian Affairs* (<https://www.iad.state.nm.us/>)
- *State of New Mexico Tribal Liaisons* (<https://www.iad.nm.gov/programs/tribal-consultation-and-collaboration/tribal-liaisons/>)
- *All Pueblo Council of Governors* (<https://www.apcg.org/>)
- *Five Sandoval Indian Pueblos* (<https://www.fsipinc.org/>)
- *Eight Northern Indian Pueblos Council* (<https://www.enipc.org/>)
- *Southern Pueblos Agency* (<https://www.bia.gov/regional-offices/southwest/southern-pueblos-agency>)
- *Indian Pueblo Cultural Center* (<https://indianpueblo.org/>)

TIER #2 - PUEBLOS LOCATED ALONG RIO GRANDE

- *Pueblo de Cochiti*
- *Pueblo of Isleta*
- *Ohkay Owingeh*
- *Pueblo of San Felipe*
- *Pueblo de San Ildefonso*
- *Pueblo of Sandia*
- *Pueblo of Santa Ana*
- *Pueblo of Santa Clara*
- *Pueblo of Santo Domingo (Kewa)*
- *Pueblo of Taos*
- *Federally Unrecognized tribe: Tortugas Pueblo*
- *Federally Unrecognized tribe: Piro-Manso-Tiwa (PMT) Tribe*

TIER #3 - PUEBLOS AND TRIBAL NATIONS LOCATED AWAY FROM RIO GRANDE

- *Ft. Sill Apache Tribe*
- *Jicarilla Apache Nation*
- *Mescalero Apache Tribe*
- *Navajo Nation*
- *Pueblo of Acoma*
- *Pueblo of Jemez*
- *Pueblo of Laguna*
- *Pueblo of Nambé*
- *Pueblo of Picuris*
- *Pueblo of Pojoaque*
- *Pueblo of Tesuque*
- *Pueblo of Zia*
- *Pueblo of Zuni*

SIGN FABRICATION & MAINTENANCE

When fabricating wayfinding signs for outdoor recreation projects, selecting suitable materials and installation methods is crucial for ensuring durability, visibility, and overall effectiveness. Durable materials such as UV-resistant inks, rust-proof metals, and high-density polyethylene are essential to withstand diverse weather conditions and maintain sign integrity over time. To combat vandalism and wear, protective coatings and robust substrates, coupled with tamper-proof hardware, enhance resilience and longevity. Effective sign placement at key decision points maximizes visibility for all users, while stable foundations and mounting techniques ensure signs remain secure. Designing signs for easy maintenance and updates and incorporating sustainable practices further enhances the functionality and environmental alignment of wayfinding systems, ultimately improving the visitor experience and safety in outdoor recreation areas.

Durability and Weather Resistance: One critical lesson in signage fabrication is the importance of choosing materials that can withstand diverse weather conditions. Materials such as UV-resistant inks, rust-proof metals (e.g., aluminum or stainless steel), and high-density polyethylene have proven effective in ensuring signs remain legible and intact over time. UV-resistant inks prevent fading caused by prolonged sun exposure, while rust-proof metals resist corrosion, extending the sign's lifespan. High-density polyethylene is favored for its resistance to both impact and environmental stressors.

Vandalism and Wear Resistance: Signs in outdoor settings are often subject to vandalism and natural wear and tear. To mitigate these risks, applying protective coatings or laminates can significantly enhance the resilience of the sign surface. Anti-graffiti coatings, for instance, allow for easier removal of paint and markers, maintaining the sign's appearance and functionality. Additionally, selecting robust substrates and securing signs with tamper-proof hardware further deters vandalism and ensures longevity.

Foundation and Mounting Techniques: The stability of sign installations heavily depends on the chosen foundation and mounting techniques. For permanent signs, concrete footings are often necessary to anchor the signposts securely, preventing them from shifting or toppling due to wind, vandalism, or accidental impact. When installing signs in areas with loose or sandy soil, deeper footings or additional stabilization methods (like using larger bases or anchoring systems) may be required to ensure durability.

Maintenance Considerations: Designing signs with maintenance and updates in mind can significantly reduce long-term costs and effort. Modular sign systems, where individual panels can be easily replaced or updated, offer a practical solution for dynamic environments where information may change periodically. Quick-release mounting brackets and standardized parts facilitate swift repairs or replacements without requiring specialized tools or skills.

Sustainable Practices:

Incorporating sustainable practices in both materials selection and installation methods is increasingly recognized as vital. Utilizing recycled or eco-friendly materials not only reduces environmental impact but also aligns with the conservation goals of many outdoor recreation projects. Furthermore, adopting installation techniques that minimize ground disturbance and preserve the natural landscape supports broader environmental stewardship objectives.

MATERIALS

Appropriate Materials

- **HIGH-DENSITY POLYETHYLENE (HDPE):**
Advantages: Durable, UV-resistant, and weather-resistant.
Uses: Commonly used for signs in parks and nature trails.
- **ALUMINUM:**
Advantages: Lightweight, strong, corrosion-resistant, and UV-resistant.
Uses: Suitable for a variety of outdoor signage applications, including traffic signs.
- **FIBERGLASS REINFORCED PLASTIC (FRP):**
Advantages: Extremely durable, UV-resistant, and can withstand harsh weather conditions.
Uses: Ideal for high-wind areas and long-lasting outdoor signs.

Appropriate Colors

- **HIGH-CONTRAST COLORS:**
Examples: Black text on a white background, white text on a dark background (e.g., dark blue, black, or green).
Advantages: Enhances readability from a distance and in varying light conditions.
- **UV-STABLE INKS AND COATINGS:**
Uses: Prevents fading and maintains color vibrancy over time.

- **PVC (POLYVINYL CHLORIDE):**
Advantages: Weather-resistant and UV-stable with a long lifespan.
Uses: Suitable for signs that are not exposed to extreme conditions but still need durability.
- **STAINLESS STEEL:**
Advantages: Extremely strong, weather-resistant, and corrosion-resistant.
Uses: Best for high-wind areas where structural integrity is crucial.
- **WOOD:**
Advantages: Cheap, simple, blends in with the natural environment.
Uses: Required material for US Forest Service Wilderness Areas.
- **REFLECTIVE OR RETRO-REFLECTIVE:**
Uses: Improves visibility in low light conditions, such as dawn, dusk, and night.
- **MATTE FINISHES:**
Advantages: Reduces glare from the sun, making the sign easier to read in bright conditions.

SIGN FABRICATION & MAINTENANCE

LOCAL FABRICATION

The following table details a list of local sign fabricators and design firms. This is not a comprehensive list and additional research should be conducted to find an appropriate fabricator if necessary.

County	Community	Name	Type of Service	Website	Contact
Taos	Village of Taos	Acorn Graphics	Architectural, commercial, personal drawing design	https://www.acorngraphicstaos.com/drawings.html	575-758-0469
Rio Arriba	Española	Meyer's Steel Design - Art and Custom Plasma cutting	Custom steel signage	http://www.meyerssteeldesign.com/	505-927-3314
Santa Fe	City of Santa Fe	Artman Productions, LLC	Printed signs, banners, 3D architectural signage	https://artmanproductions.com/	505-820-2871
		Signs Today	Customs signage, building signage	http://signssantafe.net/	505-982-9595
Sandoval	City of Rio Rancho	Deluxe Design	Exterior signage various materials and applications	https://www.deluxedesign.com/products/	505-892-8090
Bernalillo	Los Ranchos	Sightworks	Exterior signage, various materials and applications	https://sightworksexhibits.com/	505-842-5220
	Albuquerque	Salteydogg Metal FAB	Custom Signage, Powder Coating, Heat Treating, Sheet Metal, CNC Punching	http://www.salteydogg.com/	505-244-3644
		Fast Signs	Exterior signage, various materials and applications	https://www.fastsigns.com/northeast-albuquerque-nm/	505-339-2031
		Zeon Signs	Pylon, monument, hi-rise, neon, channel letters, Cabinet Signs	https://www.zeonsignsnm.com/	505-243-3771
Torrance	Mountainair	P&M Signs, INC	Wood, Metal, and more custom and standard signs	https://www.pmsignsinc.com/	505-847-2850
Valencia	City of Belen	Paul's Son Sign	Sheet metal and Vinyl Signage		505-864-4141
Socorro	City of Socorro	Lucky Signs	ADA, Vinyl, Wood Signs	http://www.lucky-signs.com/	575-854-2264

County	Community	Name	Type of Service	Website	Contact
Dona Ana	Las Cruces	Sign Design	Channel Letters, Monument, Digital, CNC Dimensional	https://isigndesign.com/gallery-of-signs	915-485-7446
		Lee Sign Co.	Sandblasted Flagstone Signs	https://www.leesignco.com/gallery	575-259-3698
		Able Sign Co.	Exterior signage, various materials and applications	https://www.ablesignco.com/	575-525-1015

DEFINITIONS

The Definitions section offers a glossary of key terms pertinent to this Signage Guide. It provides precise explanations of terms used within this guide, acknowledging that their usage and interpretation may differ from those adopted by other agencies and organizations.

ADA Requirements: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal civil rights law prohibiting discrimination against people with disabilities in everyday activities. ADA standards for signage guarantee that people with disabilities have the same opportunities as everyone else. In the context of this plan, the ADA describes these standards.

ASHTO Requirements: The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (ASHTO) supplies guidance for the design of roadways, including signage. For the purposes of this plan, ASHTO requirements are relevant to sign spacing and placement adjacent to bicycle facilities.

Directional Signs: Directional signs describe mile markers, fingerboard signs, confirmation signs, and turn signs.

Elements: Sign elements or components describe any content on the sign face, including text, logos, or images, among others.

Interpretive Signs: Interpretive signs, also called Interpretive Panel, refer to signs that are educational displays designed to provide visitors with information about a specific location's natural, cultural, historical, or ecological significance. These signs aim to enhance the visitor experience by offering insights and stories that foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of the area.

MUTCD: The Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices is a document published by the Federal Highway Administration. The MUTCD defines the standards for traffic control devices on all streets and other facilities open to public travel. The State of New Mexico has adopted the national MUTCD standards.

Primary Signs: Primary signs in the context of this Guide include sign kiosks and large panel kiosks.

Project: The term "Project" is used as a placeholder throughout the document on sign graphics to refer to a trail, facility, campground, park or any other project that signage might be developed for.

Secondary Signs: Secondary signs in the context of this Guide include Site ID sign and Map Panel.

Sign Face: The sign face is the front surface of a sign where information is displayed.