

An Act

Legislative Act 30-25

CHEROKEE NATIONAL TRAIL SYSTEM ACT

BE IT ENACTED BY THE CHEROKEE NATION:

Section 1. Title and Codification

This legislative act shall be titled and codified as the “**Cherokee National Trail System Act.**”

Section 2. Findings

The Council of the Cherokee Nation finds it to be in the national interest to plan and design a system of pedestrian and/or bicycle trails throughout the Cherokee Nation Reservation for the purposes of expanding access to public lands, promoting wellness, supporting historical and cultural interpretation efforts and promoting economic impact associated with trail usage. The Council recognizes that planning, development and construction and/or other designation of a comprehensive national trail system requires the careful and thoughtful application of substantial resources over time best achieved by establishing statutory milestone targets, executive branch reporting and Council oversight over a period of years and the development of partnerships with other sovereigns and other entities involved in similar endeavors. Accordingly, the Council concludes that a single comprehensive legislative act supportive of long-term strategic planning, development and construction and/or other designation of trails constituting the “Cherokee National Trail System” is warranted, with the goal of completing a strategic plan for said trail system by 2026 and a goal of completing said trail system by 2036.

Section 3. Purpose

The purpose of this Act is to authorize the planning, development and construction and/or other designation of the “Cherokee National Trail System,” as defined in the Act.

Section 4. Legislative History [Reserved]

Section 5. Substantive Provisions

§ 1. Definitions.

- A. “Cherokee National Trail System”: A system of pedestrian and/or bicycle trails accessible to and connecting communities within the Cherokee Nation Reservation, provided:

1. The development goal of said system is to create a trail system that covers as much of the Cherokee Nation Reservation as is practical and is as contiguous as is practical in the interest of maximizing access of Cherokee Nation citizens to natural areas or locations of historic significance within the Cherokee Nation Reservation;
2. Component trails of said system may include designation of trails managed by other sovereigns or other entities, providing that such inclusion and designation is subject to an agreement with Cherokee Nation;
3. Components of said system, to the extent owned or controlled by Cherokee Nation, shall be designated under the [Cherokee Nation Parks, Wildlands, Hunting and Fishing Preserve Act of 2021](#) and any amendments thereto.

§ 2. Amounts Authorized.

- A. **Cherokee National Trail System Strategic Plan:** For each of fiscal years 2026 and 2027, \$250,000 is authorized for the development of a Cherokee National Trail System Strategic Plan.
- B. **Cherokee National Trail System Construction:** Beginning in fiscal year 2027, funds are authorized for the construction of components of the Cherokee National Trail System to the extent expressly appropriated for the purpose or otherwise available as appropriated under the [Cherokee Nation Public Health and Wellness Fund Act](#), as amended, and the [Housing, Jobs and Sustainable Communities Act](#), as amended.
- C. **Funding Sources:** The funding sources include dividends received from those for-profit corporations in which Cherokee Nation is the sole or majority shareholder, and that are incorporated under Cherokee Nation law and grants, donations, miscellaneous sources and contributions, revenues of enterprises, taxes, and special and general fund sources, which includes funds available for authorized purposes under the Cherokee Nation Public Health and Wellness Fund Act, as amended, and the Housing, Jobs and Sustainable Communities Act, as amended.
- D. **Council Appropriation Authority Reserved:** All funding authorized herein is subject to the Council of the Cherokee Nation appropriations process.

§ 3. Authorized Activities and Reporting

- A. **Authorized Activities:** The Principal Chief by his or her designee or as expressly designated herein, is authorized to:
 1. Develop a strategic plan for the “Cherokee National Trail System,” (hereafter “CNTS Strategic Plan”), provided:
 - a. Drafting of said CNTS Strategic Plan shall be delegated to the Secretary of Natural Resources, hereafter “Secretary.”
 - b. Said CNTS Strategic Plan shall include but is not limited to including:
 - i. A proposed trail system depicted on a map of the Cherokee

- Nation Reservation which delineates existing trails, the approximate location of future trails and the basic land title status through which each proposed component passes;
 - ii. The approximate economic impact of a completed CNTS, once fully constructed, and of any completed components thereof;
 - iii. In consultation with Cherokee Nation Public Health, the public health benefit of a completed CNTS and any component trails thereof.
 - iv. The approximate investment required to complete the CNTS, including such major component trails as the Secretary deems noteworthy.
 - v. The identity of potential partners supportive of the CNTS development, construction and management.
 - vi. A recommended timeline for achieving various major milestones, as determined by the Secretary, provided that the recommended CNTS completion date should be no later than September 20, 2036.
 - c. In developing said CNTS Strategic Plan, the Secretary shall endeavor to develop trail routes which meet important national interests, including:
 - i. Connecting citizens to locations of notable natural beauty,
 - ii. Connecting citizens to locations of historic significance,
 - iii. Achieving a level of meaningful accessibility to individuals with mobility challenges,
 - iv. Geographic and population equity, and
 - v. Opportunities to connect the Cherokee National Trail System to trail systems beyond the exterior boundaries of the Cherokee Nation reservation.
 - d. Said CNTS Strategic Plan may occasionally be amended by the Secretary, subject to the requirements of this subsection of the Act.
 - e. A draft of said CNTS Strategic Plan, including any amendments thereto, shall be provided to the Council and to the public for a review and comment period of no less than 60 days before issuance of the CNTS Strategic Plan in final form, a copy of which shall be provided to the Council and made available for general public access no later than December 31, 2026.
- 2. Acquire or lease real property to effectuate the purposes and policies of this Act.
- 3. Execute contracts, memoranda of understanding or other agreements with qualified third parties, administer grants to qualified third parties, or apply for grants from qualified third parties, to effectuate the purposes and policies of this

Act.

4. Construct the Cherokee National Trail System and any component trails thereof, to the extent of appropriations and with no less than 60 days notice to the Council prior to the commencement of physical construction, unless any portion of such time frame is waived by resolution of the Council.
5. Delegate designations, and management, of the Cherokee National Trail System or any component trails thereof to the Secretary of Natural Resources, who shall manage said lands consistent with the [Cherokee Nation Parks, Wildlands, Hunting and Fishing Reserve Act of 2021](#), as amended.
6. Coordinate with the Gadugi Corps program to encourage Gadugi Corps Volunteers or Gadugi Corps National Service Participants to assist in the construction and/or maintenance of the Cherokee National Trail System and any component trails thereof.
7. Utilize, as part of the funding authorized herein, funds authorized by the [Public Health and Wellness Fund Act](#), as amended, and the [Housing, Jobs and Sustainable Communities Act](#), as amended, to the extent any construction authorized by this Act is also authorized by those Acts.
8. Develop standardized insignia, signage and other way finding aids reflective of the purposes and policies of the Act, provided said insignia, signage and other way finding aids or any substantial changes thereto are summarized and provided to the Council and to the public for a review and comment period of no less than 60 days prior to general usage, unless any portion of such time frame is waived by resolution of the Council.
9. Recommend the commemorative naming of any component trails of the Cherokee National Trail System, subject to approval of the Council by act or resolution.

B. Reporting Requirements

1. **Annual Report:** The Principal Chief or his or her designee, shall produce a “Cherokee National Trails System Annual Report,” summarizing progress by the Principal Chief to achieve the purposes and policies of this Act, provided:
 - a. Said annual report, commencing in fiscal year 2026, shall be issued between October 1st and December 31st and summarize the progress towards the objectives set forth in this Act for the previous fiscal year, including but not limited to:
 - i. Status of the CNTS Strategic Plan;

- ii. Copy of the current CNTS route map as reflected in the CNTS strategic plan and any potential amendments to the route map;
 - iii. Status of the construction of any components of the CNTS;
 - iv. Summary of any insignia, signage and other way finding aids used in connection with this Act;
 - v. Recommendations of amendments to this Act, if any.
- b. Said report shall be provided to the Council of the Cherokee Nation and made available for public inspection on Cherokee Nation's website within 30 days of completion.

C. Attribution to the Act: Any program, activity or publication relating to achieving any of the purposes and policies of this Act shall be attributed to the "Cherokee National Trail System" or some comparable attribution as determined by the Principal Chief.

Section 6. Provisions as cumulative

The provisions of this Act shall be cumulative to existing law.

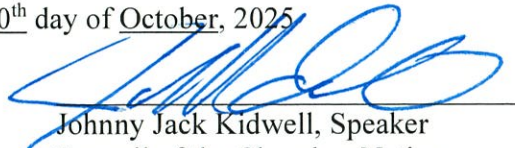
Section 7. Severability

The provisions of this Act are severable and if any part of provision hereof shall be held void the decision of the court so holding shall not affect or impair any of the remaining parts or provisions of this Act.

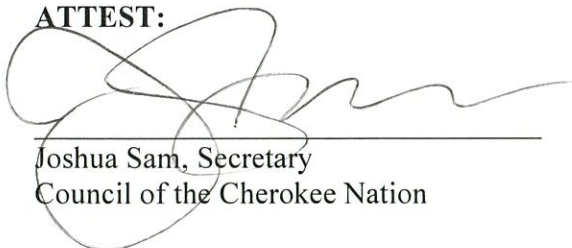
Section 8. Effective Date: Emergency Declared

It being immediately necessary for the welfare of the Cherokee Nation, the Council hereby declares that an emergency exists, by reason whereof this Act shall take effect immediately upon its approval and signatures.

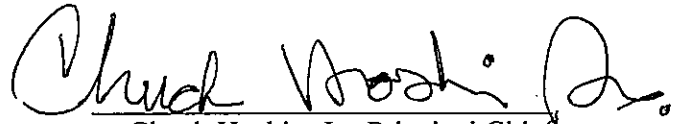
Enacted by the Council of the Cherokee Nation on the 30th day of October, 2025


Johnny Jack Kidwell, Speaker
Council of the Cherokee Nation


ATTEST:


Joshua Sam, Secretary
Council of the Cherokee Nation

Approved and signed by the Principal Chief this 7th day of November, 2025.


Chuck Hoskin, Jr., Principal Chief
Cherokee Nation

ATTEST:


Shella Bowlin, Secretary of State
Cherokee Nation

YEAS AND NAYS AS RECORDED:

Sasha Blackfox-Qualls
Candessa Tehee
Lisa Hall
Uriah Grass
Ashley Grant
Daryl Legg
Joshua Sam
Codey Poindexter

Yea
Yea
Yea
Yea
Yea
Yea
Yea
Yea

Clifton Hughes
Melvina Shotpouch
Dora Smith-Patzkowski
Kendra McGeady
Joe Deere
Kevin Easley
Danny Callison
Julia Coates
Johnny Jack Kidwell

Yea
Yea
Yea
Yea
Yea
Yea
Yea
Yea
Yea

ADMINISTRATIVE CLEARANCE

**Cherokee Nation
Act/Resolution Proposal Form**

☒ Act

☐ Resolution

Dept/Program:

TITLE:

CHEROKEE NATIONAL TRAIL SYSTEM ACT

Signature/Initial

Date

Executive Director:

DEPARTMENT CONTACT: Chuck Hoskin Jr.

RESOLUTION PRESENTER: Canaan Duncan

Signature/Initial

Date

Treasurer (Required:
Grants/Contracts/Budgets):

Johnny Jack Kidwell, Kevin Easley, Josh Sam,
Sasha Blackfox-Qualls, Daryl Legg, Clifton
Hughes, Julia Coates, Joe Deere, Danny
Callison, Melvina Shotpouch, Codey Poindexter,
Candessa Tehee, Uriah Grass, Kendra McGeady,
COUNCIL SPONSOR: Dora Patzkowski, Lisa Hall, Ashley Grant

NARRATIVE:

The purpose of this Act is to authorize the planning, development and construction and/or other designation of the "Cherokee National Trail System," as defined in the Act.

Signature/Initial

Date

Government Relations:

Signature/Initial

Date

Administration Approval:



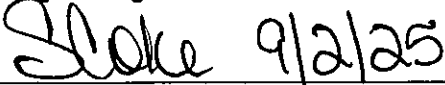
9/2/25

Signature/Initial

Date

LEGISLATIVE CLEARANCE:

Legal & Legislative Coordinator:



Signature/Initial

Date

Standing Committee & Date:

9/15/25

Resources

Chairperson: