

NEWS FROM THE PLAINS

Winter 2015

VOL XXX NO. 1

Preservation Matters! Threats to Trails Challenge Chapters

By Jere Krakow
OCTA Preservation Officer

Upon the establishment of the Oregon-California Trails Association and at several points in the course of years since, the stated Statement of Purpose and considerable focus

of the organization has been “To initiate and coordinate activities relating to the identification, **preservation**, interpretation, and improved accessibility of extant rut segments, trail remains, graves and associated historic trail sites.” Seeking preservation of trail resources has been ongoing.

As has been reported in OCTA publications, the model for trail preservation has shifted from the national to the chapter and local level. Chapter Preservation Officers and chapter members are often in the position of learning about potential threats to trail resources from development activities. This year and every year are no different. Threats range from mining and mineral development to energy and housing subdivision development.

Current examples include wind energy projects and related power lines in the Pacific Northwest, mining and mineral development in Nevada and Utah, and oil and gas energy undertakings in Wyoming, including pipelines there and in Idaho, plus irrigation reservoirs and powerline re-routing in Nebraska. In short, there is no lack of ongoing threats to trail resources. It has always been and always will be that way.

Very recently the denial of a permit in Utah by the U. S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for exploration related to potash mining has re-surfaced. The Canadian company has declared intent to challenge the denial of the permit. In a published statement, the CEO frames the project as of little consequence



Members of CA-NV Chapter along with California Trail Center Foundation members and Humboldt Highroad Historical Society members installing Carsonite markers on the Greenhorn Cutoff. Such projects draw awareness to the trails, and help protect them from damage. (photo by Janice Collett)

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NEWS FROM THE PLAINS

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Send materials to
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CALENDAR

**OCTA Mid-Year Board and
Trails to Shining Mountains
Symposium**
March 5-7, 2015
Denver, CO

OCTA Convention
Sept. 21-25, 2015
South Lake Tahoe

2014-15 OCTA Officers.

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committees



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Martin Named *NFP* Editor

Longtime OCTA member Bill Martin of Georgetown, TX, has been named Editor of *News From The Plains*, replacing Candy Moulton of Encampment, WY, who resigned to pursue her many other writing interests.

This will be Martin's second tenure as *NFP* editor. He previously edited the quarterly newsletter from 1996 to 2002. He has served in several OCTA leadership positions, including a two-year term as national President.

"I am grateful for the confidence placed in me by the Nominations committee and by the Board," he said. "I have always considered *NFP* to be comparable to a

hometown newspaper for OCTA members and I'm looking forward to continuing the great work done by Candy for the past 12 years."

Martin said he does not plan drastic changes in the format or content of the publication, but wants to bring a strong emphasis to preservation news and stories about how OCTA members are making a difference on the trails.

With the change in editors also comes a change in the email address for the publication. All communications should be sent to nfpocta@gmail.com. Mail can be sent to 706 Country Club Road, Georgetown TX 78628. Phone calls can be directed to (512) 818-1609.



Bill Martin begins another stint as editor of this publication in January.

Contact Martin at
nfpocta@gmail.com

Editorial Opinion: Leadership Key to OCTA's Future

In 1998 Roger Blair, then president of OCTA, called and asked me to work with OCTA as chair of the Publications Committee. Since I have never learned the word "no," I agreed. I well remember the first OCTA Board meeting I attended. It was in Pendleton and there was some bone of contention. I don't recall the issue, but I can clearly see (and hear) Gregory Franzwa giving the Board members a piece of his mind about how they ought to be managing the organization. I miss those days when passionate members held the Board to a high standard.

I have missed only one Board meeting since 1998, so have seen the work of many Boards.

As Editor of *NFP* for the past 12 years I have weighed in very little with my own opinions, preferring to use these pages to shine a

light on the work being done by volunteers along the trails.

Now, however, I want to say that it is time for OCTA leadership to really lead. For too long this organization has been in maintenance mode, trying to bolster membership with little success due in part to the general national attitude that the answer lies with baby boomers.

OCTA was formed as a preservation organization. If OCTA will get back to that primary mission focus, it will attract like-minded people, become rejuvenated, and be stronger and more relevant.

This organization faces some difficult decisions. The Board must deal with the financial picture; spending exceeds revenues. There is heavy reliance on federal support, and 61 percent of that money goes to fund the

association manager position. There needs to be better oversight at all levels.

An important strategic planning session will be held in Denver on March 5, followed by the Mid-year Board meeting on March 6, and a symposium on March 7. All members can attend these sessions, or weigh in by sending letters to any or all of the Board members. I urge you to do so now. The future of this organization and of our precious trails resources stand in the balance.

I am giving up my position as *NFP* editor, although I had two more years on my contract, because I need to spend my time writing more and editing less. I remain dedicated and committed to writing about and working for trail education and preservation.

—Candy Moulton

for threats to trail resources (read: the heritage of the USA), provides jobs in the region of western Utah and eastern Nevada, and has the support of the entire Utah congressional delegation. A “breaking” new project is the Department of Defense plan to expand the Utah Test and Training Range in western Utah, which could significantly impact the Hastings Cutoff. It would encompass approximately 600,000 additional acres. To the credit of the Crossroads Chapter of OCTA, hard work is ongoing urging protection of the trail resources and making the public aware of consequences of mining and Training Range activities. The chapter is very mindful of the importance of trail resources to present and future generations of Americans.

In Oregon initiative has been taken by the Northwest Chapter and the Preservation Officer to give input into the potential impact of wind energy development and related power line location. Chapter members have been vigilant and active in providing comment and expressing concern about the probable impacts.

Powerline and pipeline routing and relocation in Idaho and especially Wyoming, continue to be monitored and commented on by a cadre of chapter members, and Preservation Officers of the chapters. Their familiarity with trail routes and resources along them gives a significant assist to OCTA in seeking protection of the resources including the settings of the trail routes. To the credit of the local BLM staff and managers, there are meetings and conference calls every month about projects

along the historic trails.

In the Platte River Valley of Nebraska the threat to trail resources is woven around the precious resource of water for agricultural purposes and for wildlife, particularly migrating flocks of geese and sandhill cranes. A proposal to create reservoirs that would impact routes on the south side of the Platte west of Kearney, including the trail resources and sites related to Indian raids culminating with the Plum Creek events of 1865, are at extreme risk. The resource district has been working diligently to acquire land and developing preliminary design for reservoirs. Since federal dollars are involved the public and OCTA will be have input into the project. This development illustrates the importance of finding out early

from OCTA chapter members the potential threats, and the project timetable in order to make a difference.

Further west in the North Platte River valley a proposed re-routing of a utility line has the potential to impact trail resources, particularly Robidoux Pass. OCTA chapter members continue to monitor the proposed alignments of the line.

Though there are other ongoing developments with potential to nibble away at or gobble up trail resources, those noted above give examples of threats to trail resources and give extra meaning to OCTA’s Statement of Purpose and a key emphasis on **preservation**. We all need to be ever vigilant in monitoring trail resources and should risks occur, convey that information to the chapter Preservation Officers.

Efforts Underway to designate Park HQ Building in Santa Fe as National Monument

Compiled from Reports in the Santa Fe New Mexican

The Park Service Southwest Regional Headquarters for the National Park Service in Santa Fe is in a building constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps and the Works Progress Administration in 1939. In July the building celebrated its 75th anniversary, but since then the NPS halted open public hours, a move that has raised concerns among historic preservation groups and individuals in New Mexico.

The Santa Fe City Council has approved a resolution calling on Congress to designate the building as a national monument. “Until

recent limitations on public access, exhibits and interpretive programs, public activities in the building have become an important living part of Santa Fe’s community life and development,” reads part of the resolution.

James Doyle, a spokesman for the NPS intermountain regional office in Denver, says 70 employees work at the Santa Fe office to help support 82 public parks across the Southwest. Although the building is closed to general public access, tours can be arranged by contacting NPS. The building holds a collection of New Deal public art that is of interest to visitors and Santa Fe residents.

Proposed Utah Test Range Would Negatively Impact National Historic Trails

A Department of Defense proposal to significantly expand the Utah Test and Training Range in Western Utah could significantly impact National Historic Trails, according to T. Michael Smith, preservation officer of the Utah Crossroads Chapter of OCTA.

The test range—already the largest supersonic restricted airspace in the continental U.S.—would expand through an administrative transfer of some 625,000 acres of Bureau of Land Management land, and an additional 85,000 acres of other federal land, to the control of the Department of Defense, according to news reports that surfaced in October.

The Hastings Cutoff of the California National Historic Trail—traversed by the ill-fated Donner Party and others in the late 1840s—goes through the heart of the proposed expanded range area. The Pony Express and Central Overland trails traverse the southern edge of it.

“While supposedly needed just for flyover purposes, the potential expansion of the adjacent bombing range could have far-reaching negative environmental consequences, if land management goes from the BLM to DOD,” according to Smith. “These could include accidental or intended ordnance drops, road closures, grazing, recreation, mining, geothermal, wildlife and proposed wilderness area losses. As important as the historic trails are, they are hardly the only reason people need to better scrutinize

this proposed transfer.”

A recent amendment by Utah Senators Orrin Hatch and Mike Lee to the 2015 Defense Appropriation Bill to transfer the lands to the DOD has been withdrawn. Hatch has said he plans to hold a series of public meetings and congressional committee hearings in 2015.

“The playa out there is one of the few places in the entire historic trail system where the view and the experience today is just as dramatic as it was for the pioneers who took this so-called short cut to California over 160 years ago,” states Smith.



The Hastings Cutoff is one area of the National Historic Trail system that would be impacted by the proposal to expand the Utah Test Range. The Crossroads Chapter is waging an aggressive campaign, along with environmental groups, to alert the public about the threat to the trails in the area. (Photos by Quackgrass Sally)



Bill Hill to Chair Publications

Bill Hill will take over as Chair of the OCTA Publications Committee, a position Bill Martin has held.

Hill will relinquish his position as chairman of the OCTA Education Awards and Publications Committee in order to take on this new responsibility.

Hill's interest in history and traveling developed early in his life. As a youngster, whenever his family had a vacation, they headed west. As an adult, he has spent more than twenty years traveling along the emigrant trails that he now writes about.

He has written books about the Oregon, California, Santa Fe, and Pony Express Trails. In addition, he has written numerous articles and various trail activity books

focused on children audiences, including OCTA's publications for the Oregon/California Trail, Mormon Pioneer Trail, Pony Express Trail, and Lewis & Clark Trail. Hill is a charter member and former director of OCTA, chair of OCTA's education committee, a member of the Santa Fe Trail Association, and a member of a variety of state historical associations.

Hill earned an MS in Education and a CAS in Education Administration from Hofstra University and is a retired social studies teacher from Commack (NY) High School. Bill and his wife Jan (also a familiar face at OCTA functions) reside in Centereach, New York on Long Island.

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NATIONAL FRONTIER TRAILS MUSEUM

The **National Frontier Trails Museum** in Independence, Missouri brings the pioneer experience on the trails to life. The only museum in the nation certified to interpret the Lewis & Clark, Santa Fe, Oregon, California and Mormon Pioneer trails, the **National Frontier Trails Museum** offers:

- A unique collection of original artifacts and special exhibits
- Firsthand written accounts, travel diaries and journals
- Interactive displays, audio guides and gallery walks
- Children's programs and activities
- A robust research library
- A gift store with the region's largest selection of trails books and merchandise

Pack your provisions, circle the wagons and saddle up for a visit to the **National Frontier Trails Museum** where the West welcomes you, the journey begins and your adventure awaits.

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Partnership Efforts Bolster Federal Support for Trails

*By Jere Krakow
OCTA PNTS Representative*

Following the formation of the Partnership for the National Trails System (PNTS) in 1991, OCTA became a member of this advocacy group for the National Trails System (historic and scenic trails). Since then many other trail associations have become members of this national umbrella organization for the national trails. The PNTS has long voiced support for the trails to Congress and the federal agencies that administer and manage the trails throughout the nation. It has made a very significant difference.

The goal of advocacy has been to increase federal appropriations for trails in the budgets of the federal agencies engaged with the national trails. From less than \$2 million per year, the budgets have increased to \$28 million per year. Persuading Congress has been very effective. Using the compilation of volunteer hours and monetary contributions by trail associations and aggregating them in a one page handout demonstrates how much a dollar appropriated may be leveraged. When members of Congress review the compilation of volunteer hours converted to dollars plus the contributed dollars, they quickly realize how the National Trails System functions with thousands of volunteers. The aggregated totals for 2013 are impressive

Volunteer hours: 1,111,506
Value of the hours: \$24,608,743
Private contributions:
\$10,684,851.

As a non-profit organization,

the PNTS seeks to coordinate public policy advocacy and advise federal agency managers on National Trail System issues.

The current goals of the PNTS are:

1) make all Americans aware of the national trails, 2) complete the existing national trails on the ground, and 3) increase the capacity of trail organizations to sustain trails.

To accomplish these goals requires budgetary support. This year the Board and Leadership Council of the PNTS have voted to increase the dues of member organizations for the first time since founding. The increase will provide financial support for the PNTS and help to enable a staff increase to provide better service for the National Trails community.

As federal budgets shrink the PNTS will find it necessary to focus efforts to maintain current fiscal support, actively advocate for raising the level of skills of volunteers, continue the exchange



*OCTA members who attended the Partnership workshop in Salt Lake City at Donner-Reed Pass above Pilot Valley.
(Photo by Travis Boley)*

of information nationwide, increase the efficiency of public policy, and seek solutions to issues affecting the national trails system.

For OCTA the dues increase will rise from the current \$1,400 per year to \$2,200 per year. The increase amounts to approximately 60 cents per member. It is of considerable value for OCTA to approve the increase through Board action.

For fiscal year 2013 the OCTA budget totaling \$348,009 received \$157,150 (45%) from the National Park Service. The PNTS member organizations that advocate for the National Trails System number 40 at present. Working in partnership to achieve public awareness and support for the trails around the nation is critical at this juncture.

NPS Support to Trails in 2013

The National Trails Intermountain Region of the National Park Service provided \$833,520 to trails associations in Fiscal Year 2013. The money was distributed as follows:

Trail of Tears Association \$190,450
Santa Fe Trail Association \$159,645
Oregon-California Trails Association \$157,150
Old Spanish Trail Association \$91,500
National Pony Express Association \$82,000
El Camino Real de los Tejas NHT Association \$87,205
El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro Association \$65,570

Board Nomination Deadline February 15

*Duane A. Iles
Chairman Nomination
and Leadership Committee*

Nominations are now being accepted for the National Board of Directors. Each year, elections are held for open positions on the Board. Directors can serve no more than two consecutive three-year terms on the Board. Positions expiring in 2015 are those held by Doug Jensen (finishing his second term) and those of Brian Larson, Vern Osborne, and Loren Pospisil who will be eligible to run for reelection.

In addition to policy and priority-setting responsibilities, members of the Board also serve as important liaisons with OCTA's

chapters, with an opportunity to represent the interests of the chapters at Board meetings and in the organization's national affairs.

Serving on the OCTA Board of Directors is a very rewarding way to serve our organization. I strongly encourage you to consider becoming a candidate. Board members are expected to provide leadership in the affairs of the association including business and financial management, and attend two board meetings, one held in conjunction with the annual convention and a mid-year meeting, usually held in the spring. Board members are also responsible for electing national officers.

In order to be a candidate for

the Board of Directors all that is required is a short statement of qualifications and experience, a photograph, and the endorsements of three members of OCTA.

Candidacy papers should be sent to Duane Iles at 96cruisin@emarqmail.com or P.O. Box 310, Holton, Kansas 66436. If you have any questions please contact Iles. For more information about the elections process or the job you may also contact Nomination & Leadership Committee members Jack Fletcher at jpffletcher@wavecable.com or Fern Linton at flinton@wyoming.com. Additional information can also be found in the Members Area of the OCTA website.

Submission deadline: Feb. 15.

Tribes, Tales & Trails

Marshall County Symposium

By Alicia Keegan

The Marshall County symposium was held Sept. 25-28 under joint partnership with the Alcove Spring Preservation Association, OCTA, and the National Park Service. The symposium opened with a reception and the showing of *Saving a Legacy* and *Across the Kansas Prairie*.

On Friday morning National President, John Krizek of Prescott, AZ gave the welcome followed by Arleta Martin and Alicia Keegan giving a presentation on some of trail sites in Marshall County.

Ron Parks who shared his reflections on writing "*The Darkest Period: The Kanza*

Indians and Their Last Homeland, 1846-1873. Beth Skinner told about the Marshall County Historical Society's genealogical and research library in the Historic Courthouse in Marysville and Aaron Mahr, superintendent of the Intermountain Region of the NPS spoke about the role the NPS plays with trails organizations.

Other speakers were Lois Cohorst discussing the Otoe Missouri Tribe; Jon Boursaw on the history of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation; Richard Gould on the Pawnee Indians and the Pawnee Indian Museum State Historic Site at Republic, KS. Nick and Linda Schmitz told about the eastern long hunter; Don and Connie Werner spoke on "*Wagons*

and their role in the Movement West." Werner is a wainwright and a wheelwright. After the evening meal Gary & Joyce Maddox received OCTA's Volunteer Award for service at Alcove Spring.

On Saturday at Alcove Spring, John Schwartz spoke about Dr. William Boyakin and local history. Later that morning, the National Park Service gave a presentation about the development of Alcove Spring. After lunch, the Pawnee Indians visiting from Oklahoma did exhibition dancing including the Pawnee War Dance.

Participants spent Sunday visiting the Blue Rapids Museum, riding the Central Branch Railway, and touring Waterville's Weaver Hotel, depot and opera house.

Award Nominations Sought by June 1 Deadline

*By Dick Nelson
Awards Committee Chair*

The Awards Committee seeks nominations for deserving candidates to receive recognition at OCTA's 2015 Convention in South Lake Tahoe, CA. Please be aware that recognition comes from the general membership and not from the Awards Committee.

If there are no nominations forthcoming from the membership, no awards will be granted.

Nominations should be submitted on the Awards forms available on the OCTA website. To find the form go to www.octa-trails.org. At the top of the page, click on "Members" then scroll down and click on "Activity Forms." Scroll down to Awards and then open the application forms. Scroll through all the forms to find the appropriate one(s). Complete the form(s) and email to Dick Nelson, Awards Chair, at kcnelson42@sbcglobal.net.

Alternatively, the forms may be printed and sent via postal mail to Dick Nelson, 12812 W. 100th Terrace, Lenexa, KS. 66215. If you do not have access to the Internet and need a form, contact OCTA Headquarters at 888-811-6282. Be sure to provide sufficient justification and qualifications so that the committee can make informed decisions. The forms direct you to contact the nominees before nomination and the end of the forms mentions follow-up publicity. This is not necessary in order to submit the nomination, especially if it discourages you from submitting a deserving nomination. You may ignore these

steps if you wish. **Deadline for completed nominations is June 1.**

Please use the form best fitting the qualifications of the candidate. The award categories are:

**Gregory M. Franzwa
Meritorious Achievement**

Award—OCTA's highest award granted for long-term significant contributions to OCTA. Only members qualify.

**Elaine McNabney
Distinguished Volunteer**

Award—Awarded to OCTA members who contribute significantly to achieving OCTA shorter term goals and objectives not rising to the level of length of service or breadth of involvement of Meritorious Achievement recipients.

**Distinguished Service
Award**—Recognition of organizations, businesses, or individuals who contribute, participate, or share interest in furthering OCTA's programs directly or provide substantial support in a non-affiliated way to trail preservation and education. Non-members may qualify for this recognition.

Friend of the Trail Award—Presented to groups, individuals, or organizations that have direct ties to lands over which historic trails pass. Neither property ownership nor current residence on trail property is required, but emphasis is placed on preservation of trail remnants, education of the public about their historic resources, and allowing responsible public access to the historic resources.

**National Certificates of
Appreciation**—Given to

individuals and organizations that have made a particular effort in achieving a short-term OCTA goal. These certificates are for efforts of national scope.

**David Welch Preservation
Award**—For special efforts regarding preservation. Not necessarily given every year.

Young OCTAN Award—Presented to youth 6-21 years of age who have demonstrated particular interest in OCTA and the history and/or preservation of historic emigrant trails. An entire class or group of school-aged children may qualify as one aggregated nominee. OCTA membership is not required.

If you have any questions about the awards program, please contact Dick Nelson at the email and postal addresses provided above. Again, these are awards to recognize your friends and OCTA co-workers; if there are no nominations, there will be no awards! Don't let that happen. There are many deserving individuals in OCTA, but it is up to you to inform the committee who they are.

Janet Ann Rhoades Dies in Oregon

Janet Ann Campbell Rhoades, long-time OCTA member and wife of former OCTA National Secretary Bernie Rhoades, died Nov. 12. Services were held Nov. 23 in Edgewood, OR.

Donations in her memory can be made to OCTA.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

An Education Breakthrough

*By John Krizek
jkrizek33@gmail.com*

For as long as I can remember, we've dreamed of getting more young people involved in OCTA and having our education systems more into teaching western history.

A breakthrough may be at hand. The Independence School District in Missouri is working on a plan to incorporate local trail history into its regular 8th grade curriculum.

This effort started at the sign dedication ceremony in Sugar Creek last September, when the school board vice president, and the superintendent, heard OCTA Association Manager Travis Boley talking about the project to scan the Merrill Mattes collection at the National Frontier Trails Museum in Independence, to make this trove of trail history more available to researchers and scholars.

The school district plan is for students to use journals from the Mattes collection to learn about the local area's trail history, and to do some "journaling" on their own. It is to become part of the 8th grade social studies curriculum every spring.

The Independence School District has about 1,000 8th grade students. The neighboring Liberty School District, of approximately the same size, is considering joining in the same project. Boley is working with district authorities on a grant application to help launch the educational initiative.

A Strategic Plan Review

The Mid-Year OCTA Board meeting March 6 in Denver will be bracketed by a couple of noteworthy events. One is an all-day review and update of the OCTA strategic plan on Thursday, March 5.

The other is a symposium on Saturday March 7 put on by the Colorado/Cherokee Chapter, at the historic Four Mile House in Denver. (See more information elsewhere in this issue.)

In preparation for this strategic plan review, three things are happening;

A special financial planning task force has been assembled by Dave Welch, chairman of the Investment Advisory Committee. The task force—which includes a roster of experienced OCTA leaders and advisors—will review the organization's financial performance over the past 10 years, and offer recommendations for achieving a balanced budget.

A financial review, authorized by the Board following the summer Board meeting, is under way. Under the supervision of the Audit Committee chaired by Bill Martin, for the first time in several years an outside CPA firm is examining our books and procedures, to make sure everything is OK or identify what can be done better. Much of the data being developed by this process—which should be completed by the time you read this—will be helpful to the task

force mentioned above.

The third thing is a convention management review, being conducted by a special task force chaired by Board member Verne Osborne. Conventions are a critical part of OCTA's income, and consume an increasing proportion of our headquarters staff's time and resources. How duties are shared with host chapters with their interests in mind are among the details being studied by this task force.

These efforts should lead to a productive session for the Board—and hopefully a bright future for OCTA—as we look ahead to fulfilling our preservation mission in the years ahead.

Bob Pearce Dies Nov. 18 in Nevada

Bob Pearce, one of the original group bringing the California Trail Interpretive Center to Elko, NV, died in Reno, Nov. 18, 2014, at the age of 88.

A former chamber of commerce manager and member of the local historical society, Pearce had great interest in following the California Trail and showing others the trail ruts throughout Elko County. He belonged to Trails West and OCTA and participated in many conventions and field trips.

Memorial contributions may be made to the California Trail Interpretive Center Library, in care of the California Trail Center-3900 Idaho Street, Elko, Nevada 89801.

Annual Appeal Fundraising Goal is \$22,000

Contributions to the annual campaign are steadily coming in, as of Nov. 30, we have collected close to \$9,500. We greatly appreciate this support. If you haven't made your donation yet, please help us attain our goal by contributing. You may contribute online by visiting our website www.octa-trails.org or send directly to HQ. OCTA, PO Box 1019, Independence, Missouri 64051

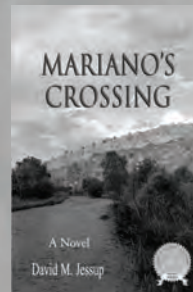
Listed below are the names of those contributing since the beginning of the drive that began in November.

Allison, Jim
 Alvord, Lynne
 Bedell, Jerry
 Beers III, Frank
 Bell, Cecilia and John
 Berger, Dave and Linda
 Bieber, William
 Boom, Janet
 Boothby, Brent
 Bowser, Carolyn
 Bowen, Margaret
 Breen, Kelly
 Breen-Wagner, Bonnie
 Burke, Marvin
 Calhoun, Glenn and Peggy
 Clark, Foster
 Cogorno, Barbara
 Cook, Cook
 Corder, Robert
 Costa, Arthur and Nancy
 Coward, Robert
 Culler, Virgil
 Dale, Jo Anna
 Diehl, Kelly
 Dunne, Dan and Jeri
 Edwards, Charles
 Elig, Nancy
 Elliott, Janet
 Evans, Shirley

Forsythe, Warren
 Gaddis, Marilyn
 Gibbs, Robert
 Gorzitze, Vern
 Hauter, Walt and Margaret
 Heil, Theodore
 Herring, James
 Hesse, Beverly
 Hicks, Gary
 Holbrook, Connie
 Hughston, Betty
 Jones, Melissa Shaw
 King, Philip
 Kissane, John
 Koch, Gerald and Rosette
 Lambert, Gerald
 Lambert, Lyle
 Larson, Bob and Karen
 Lauha, Eric
 Lynch, Edward
 Madsen Jr, Francis
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 McGeeney, Michele
 Messick, Ellen
 Meyer, Wally
 Miller, Jenny
 Moore, Jack
 Mueller, Mary
 NW Chapter
 Nelson, Dick and Ruby
 Palmquist, Keith
 Pauley, Marylyn and Stephen
 Quist, William and Carol
 Ragen, Brooks
 Renard, Meredith
 Riser, George
 Salt, Sue Sesnon
 Schmidgall, Warren

Schoch, Raymond
 Serr, Gene
 Shurtleff, Marley
 Sicotte, Nancy
 Snyder, Brian and Sharon
 Stultz, Allen
 Tacey, Linda
 Trevallee, Richard and Shirley
 Turner, Linda
 Voth, Mark and Lynn
 Watts, Harold
 Welch, David and Wendy
 Werner, Gary
 Young, Dick and Joan

Bonnie Breen-Wagner made a donation in honor of Carolyn Logan. Making donations in memory of Janie Rhoades were Chuck and Suzanne Hornbuckle, Dean Johnson, Jerry Peppers, Marley Shurtleff, John and Susie Winner and Muriel Carbiener.



Mariano's Crossing

By David M. Jessup

Based on real characters and the mysteries connected with historic events, *Mariano's Crossing* is a mesmerizing tale of people struggling to find their places in the rapidly changing landscape of post-gold rush Colorado along the Cherokee Trail.

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- *A vivid piece of writing!* *NY Times* bestselling author Louis Bayard.
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Order from bookstores, on-line booksellers or from www.davidmjessup.com

OCTA Delivers Digital Materials to Members and General Public

By Travis Boley
tboley@indepmo.org

OCTA members will be excited to learn about two new benefits of membership that will soon be available.

Over the course of 2014, OCTA has digitized every copy of the *Overland Journal*, dating back to the first issue of 1983. These will soon be available via username and password on OCTA's website. This username and password will be available in the next issue of *News From the Plains*. Announcements will also be made in OCTA's E-News and on OCTA's Facebook page. You will soon have immediate access to every single article ever published, but only if you're a member. Be sure to let others know they now have a new reason to join OCTA!

For the long term, the Publications Committee is investigating how to turn this vast resource into a revenue stream for OCTA, from non-member sources such as researchers, authors, libraries and the like.

The other exciting project that OCTA has nearly completed is the digitization of a portion of the Merrill Mattes collection. This collection was the genesis

of OCTA's library, which is today housed at the National Frontier Trails Museum in Independence, MO. Mattes, one of the founders of OCTA and the longtime superintendent of Scottsbluff National Monument, donated his massive collection to OCTA, and for the first time, much of it will be available without the need to visit Independence. Diaries, journals, letters, reminiscences, and other first-person accounts of the emigrant trails experience will soon be available to researchers the world over, all to be accessible on OCTA's website. Most of these are in easy-to-read transcript form.

We strongly feel that these two new online repositories of information will help spread OCTA's brand like never before. OCTA is constantly looking for ways to reach new people and garner new supporters. As these materials become available, please make other interested parties aware of their existence.

We also have digital copies of new issues of *News From the Plains*. If you would like to receive the *NFP* by electronic delivery, please contact headquarters at 888-811-6282 or email Kathy Conway at kconway@indepmo.org.

School District Program

One way in which OCTA is reaching new people is that the Independence (MO) School District is modifying its 8th grade social studies curriculum to include an original research project utilizing the resources found in the Mattes Collection. All 1,000 district students will undertake their projects each spring, beginning in March 2015. OCTA is currently working with the district's curriculum director to design and implement this program. Training of the teachers who will be using the program will start in January.

We are also looking at the possibility of another nearby district modifying its curriculum to incorporate the first-person trails experience into its 8th grade lesson plans. We feel that this new program has the potential to spread into classrooms nationwide and perhaps even be adopted in some foreign nations. OCTA is looking at the Independence School District as an idea incubator on how best to reach school children with our myriad resources.

Both of these projects are nearly two years in the making and were made possible with some underwriting from the National Park Service. Be sure to thank our NPS partners whenever you see them for helping to fund these important digitization projects.



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Education Committee Deadlines Approach

*By William Hill
Education Awards and
Publications Committee Chair*

Winter brings the Education Awards and Publications Committee its first two deadlines. February 1 is the project due date for our yearly book raffle for a class set of one of OCTA's four educational activity books. Information has been posted on OCTA's website and more than one thousand schools have been directly notified. All that is needed for entry is that a postcard be sent to headquarters with the teacher's contact information and the title of the book they hope to win. The lucky teacher and school is the one drawn from all those entered. But the real lucky ones are the students who will have access to materials in their classroom.

Our next deadline is March 31 for our Outstanding Educator awards. If you know of a teacher or school that has a program that you have heard good things about, it may be just the one that deserves

OCTA's award. Information is on our website. Nominees can come from the primary, junior high, high school, and post high school levels. If you've heard of or participated in a park or museum program about the westward migrations, we'd like to hear about those also.

Our third project's deadline is in the early spring – April 15. That is when the artwork for our OCTA calendar is due. The theme for the 2016 calendar is "Emigrant and Indian Children's Games and Toys." This contest is open to elementary school aged children. We hope teachers will incorporate this theme into their lessons about westward migrations or state history and we hope they encourage all their students to participate. However, children can enter without their teacher's or school's participation.

Information about all these programs can be found on OCTA's website, www.octa-trails.org. All you need to do is to go to the "Home" page, click on "Learn,"

and then on the "Opportunities" section, and then to any or all three of the projects listed there. If you don't have access to a computer, just contact headquarters at 888-811-6282. Like they say, "You have to be in it, to win it!"

WANTED

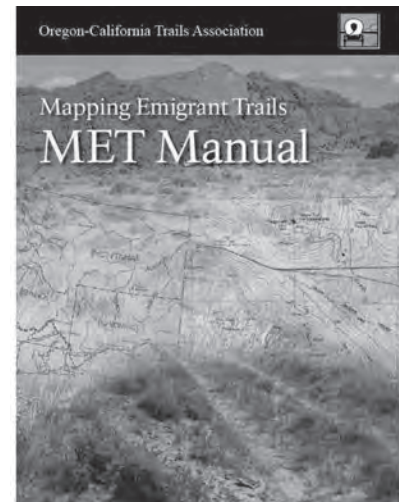
Reinforcement for the Education Publications Committee. Chairman William Hill has done an outstanding job over several years with calendars, publications, teacher awards, etc., with limited committee resources. With expanded responsibilities on the horizon, this committee needs volunteers with experience in the educational realm.

Contact Hill, at hillhousew@aol.com, or OCTA headquarters, at 888-811-6282.

Updated MET Manual Available

An update of OCTA's classic Mapping Emigrant Trails (MET) Manual is now available. The new manual is a significant expansion of the original document, although it does not alter the trail classification methodology. Additions include "Planning and Executing a Mapping Project," "Setting Classifications," and "Photo Documentation of Trails." Thirteen appendices provide supporting material for the main text.

OCTA members may purchase a bound copy including all main sections (Preface, Introduction and Parts A through E) and the thirteen appendices from the OCTA bookstore for \$10. Non-members may purchase it for \$20. All sections are available for downloading at no cost from the OCTA website (octa-trails.org). The printed version includes color illustrations, two-sided printing and is wire-bound with a protective cover.



Planned Giving for OCTA's Future

*By Melissa Shaw Jones
Fundraising Chair
melissa@onesfinancial.com*

November is a time to assess the whole year, and then eat big meals with family and friends and take time to appreciate all that we have here in America. We take time to be thankful, on purpose. It hasn't always been easy, but we have always taken time to reflect and be thankful no matter which generation you came from. Family traditions are built around the holidays.

For our grandparents who didn't have "much" they always wanted their children and grandchildren to have "more." The beauty of America was that opportunity

was for all, not only those whose parents had good bloodlines or great wealth. Common people could advance in America and create opportunity for themselves and their family.

The beauty of philanthropy in this country is the great tradition of men and women who had the vision to hold onto things that mattered and build upon them. History does matter, and so do old things.

As we travel the trails today that crisscross America we are reminded that time moves faster these days and we continue to pick up momentum. It's important to preserve the past and learn about it. Tithing isn't just something we do in church. We vote with our

dollars, and where we put those dollars. Your spending patterns and your giving patterns leave footprints, too. Be sure to include causes that matter to you during your lifetime in your estate plan and beneficiary designations.

It's easy to name OCTA as the beneficiary of an IRA account. OCTA receives the entire gift, and no income taxes need to be paid on that gift. It's a great way to give 100 percent dollars that would have been eroded by income taxes when you leave it to your kids or grandkids. As an organization, OCTA will continue its work to carry on what you are no longer here to do. Keep us in mind when you're planning. We are planning on you!

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First Commerce Bank	902 Broadway	Marysville KS
Y Loop Road Trips	PO Box 222	Wapiti WY
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Willow Springs Tree No Longer Living

By Lee Underbrink

It seems like I have lost an old friend on Natrona County's Oregon Trail Road, (CR319). I have traveled by this tree at Willow Springs many times, leading people over the trail.

When I first viewed this tree in 1956 it was full, extending shade over a small house. There were corrals near the house and it was evident that someone once was a resident. The big tree and the grass around it benefited from a flowing Willow Springs, the first good water along the trail since the North Platte.

This place was noted in almost every diary written by emigrants on their way west. It was also a camping ground for those travelers, a place where they found water and grass.

The tree itself probably dates to the early 1900s when homesteads were established. The



The Willow Springs tree in Wyoming is just a skeleton of its former vibrant self, standing guard near the old trail campsite. (Photo by Lee Underbrink)



When Wyoming OCTA Chapter members placed a marker in 2008 to recognize Willow Springs, the old tree was still living, but showing signs of age. (Photo by Candy Moulton)

emigrants would have cut it down for firewood.

In recent years hunters roped their game up in the tree to skin their hunt. Many a picnic has been held in the cooling shade of the tree.

The corral, sheds, and little house have long been removed since they became a hazard. The big lone tree did not give up easily for it still had a few leaves five years ago. At least now we have a fenced sign telling about the importance of the trail site.

Good Bye Old Tree!



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“Trails to Shining Mountains” Symposium in March

*By Berl Meyer
Chapter President*

The Colorado-Cherokee Trail Chapter will host a morning symposium, “Trails to the Shining Mountains” on Saturday, March 7, 2015, at the Four Mile Historic Park in Denver. The symposium is a joint event with the Rocky Mountain Map Society.

The Four Mile House was the last stop coming west to Denver along the Cherokee Trail.

Symposium speakers include:

- Robert Lowdermilk, a member of the Board of Trustees of Four Mile Historic Park; Tom Noel, Professor of History at the University of Colorado at Denver; Christopher Lane, owner of the Philadelphia Print Shop West in Denver. Chris is also the map appraiser on Antiques Roadshow; and Wesley Brown, a map collector and founder of the Rocky Mountain Map Society.

On Friday evening, there will be a reception at the Philadelphia Print Shop West.

Further details and information on how to register will be on OCTA’s national website, and the Colorado-Cherokee Trail Chapter website.

Chapter Meets in Sterling

The chapter had an outing in October to the Overland Trail Museum and Summit Springs Battlefield near Sterling, CO, led by our vice president Bill Shanks.

Located on Highway 6, east of the South Platte River, the Overland Trail commemorates the historic westward migration of gold seekers and early pioneers.

The museum was named after the Overland Trail stage route. The Overland Trail followed the south bank of the South Platte River through northeastern Colorado.

The museum was opened in 1936 in the original building, which was made of native rock and designed after the early trading forts. In the past 65 years much has been added, not only to the structure, but also to the collections which have been donated by local citizens.

Mapping Team News

Our mapping volunteers, Rich Deisch, Bruce Watson, Bill Burr, Roger Hanson, John Murphy and Gary Disette, have been researching and calculating the map points of the Cherokee Trail in Colorado. The work done by these folks has been very accurate and professional. Researching the survey notes is very meticulous work and takes a good set of eyes. We still need a few more good eyes for our mapping.

The research is done in Douglas and El Paso Counties, but field work still needs to be done. The mapping committee has completed five additional townships in El Paso and Pueblo counties.



Trail Bridges an Interstate

The Oregon-California Trail will soon have its own pedestrian bridge over a busy interstate highway in Kansas City. The bridge is part of the 40-mile Three Trails Corridor project under way through the metropolitan Kansas City area, from the landing site at Sugar Creek, MO, to the Santa Fe/Oregon-California Trail split site near Gardner, KS. OCTA intern Kelsy Sacrey checked on the construction site recently. (Photo by Travis Boley)

Preparations Underway for 2015 Convention

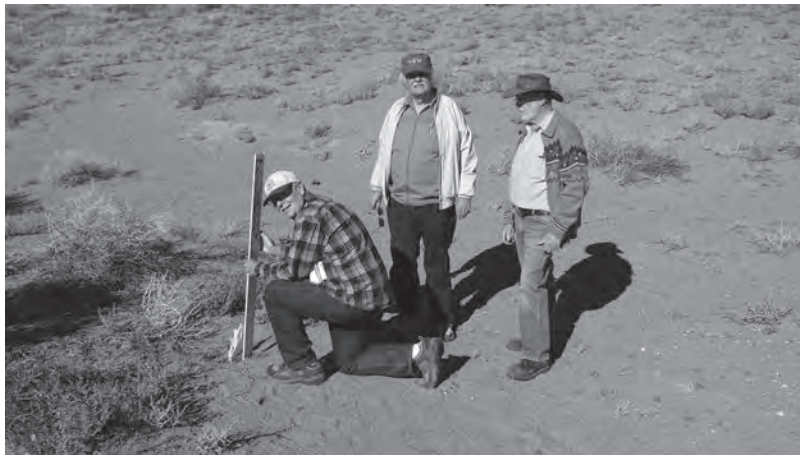
By Mark Wilson
Chapter President

If you have not made it over the High Sierra by the time you read this, I suggest you winter over in the Meadows or the Carson River Valley. For those of you coming West in 2015 be advised that the CA/NV Chapter has been working hard to ensure a great experience in the High Sierra at Lake Tahoe next September for the National Convention. We have several exciting field trips planned which range from bus tours to hikes of a few miles. At this time we are still

soliciting papers for presentation; so if you have a topic you would like to share contact Ken Johnson at kljstn@msn.com for your submission. Susan Winner is soliciting items for the auctions and raffle. If you find some appropriate items while cleaning out your storage spaces, contact Susan at swinner@sbcglobal.net, or just bring them along on your journey to Lake Tahoe. It is rumored that Mark Twain might be coming through the area on his way to a new job in Sacramento.

Despite all the activity associated with convention planning the trails have not been forgotten. At our fall chapter board meeting, several ideas for new projects were discussed.

One project would be to sponsor new roadside interpretive panels similar to the ones on the Carson Route. Another would be to inventory and monitor the markers, monuments, and



Marking the Greenhorn Cutoff in Nevada, from left John Winner, Dave Hollecker, and Tom Fee. (Photo by Dick Waugh)

interpretive signs along the trails. John Winner was quite active this fall representing the chapter at the Strategic Planning Session of the California Trail Center Foundation in Elko, NV. It must have been an inspiring conference because Winner was able to gather a group of conference participants from the BLM and a local group to head out the next day and install 20 carsonite markers on the Greenhorn Cutoff. From Elko Winner traveled eastward to Salt Lake City to participate in the National Trails Partnership Conference. This conference was hosted by the OCTA Crossroads Chapter and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management.

In California Dick Waugh

led a party along a section of the Beckworth Trail to install carsonite markers. Another group worked with the California Department of Fish and Game on the Luther Pass Trail and to validate the trail in Hope Valley. Mapping work continued on the Johnson Cutoff. These trails will be part of convention field trips.

In Nevada Dave Hollecker, Tom Fee, Dick Waugh, and John Winner conducted the annual photo monitoring of the Fernley Swales. The Nevada Department

of Transportation installed the Auto Tour Route signs in the Carson Valley leading to the California state line.

There is some good news concerning the status of the Auto Tour Route sign project for the trails in California. In October, Caltrans, the California Department of Transportation, finalized an agreement with the National Park Service to transfer funds to the Park Service for the manufacture of the roadside signs.

Ken Johnston, Howdy Hoover, and David Freeman are working on our Spring Symposium. The theme will highlight on new archeological work at Peter Lassen's Rancho, which is north of Chico, CA.

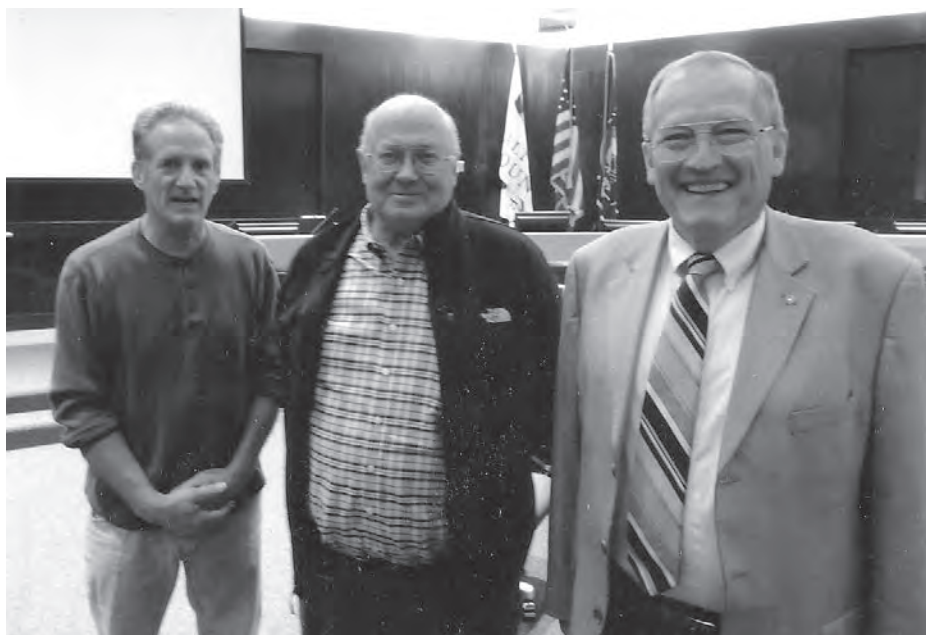
Chapter co-hosts Partnership Workshop

By A. Oscar Olson

Fall has been busy for members of the Crossroads Chapter. In late October, Crossroads worked and participated with the local offices of U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for three days at a workshop regarding partnerships and dealing with trails recognition and preservation. It was good to see many old friends from National as well as many new friends. It shows there is growing interest out there in preserving the old trails. Cheers to BLM for their efforts in putting this together. There were two field trips—one out east on a charter bus to Echo Canyon sites and then out west in vans to Silver Island, UT, to examine trails on the Salt Desert.

On November 8 we had our fall trip. We explored the Simpson Military Road from Evanston, WY, to Camp Floyd, UT. A full day for sure, but what a success! Thirteen cars showed up at Bear River, WY, and were led by Jesse Petersen who described the route via CB radio. We saw many sights that are about lost to development, especially in Utah County, UT. But we made it to Camp Floyd by late afternoon, which made a good full day. Lunch was at Coalville, Utah (picnic or eat in).

On Nov. 13 we held the annual fall/winter meeting. Thirty-six members were present. Elections were held and the new officers are Terry Welch, president, and Michael Landon, vice president. Drew Wanosik and Craig Fuller



New officers of the Crossroads Chapter are from left, Mike Landon, vice president elect; Terry Welch, president, and Gar Elison, outgoing president.

will continue as treasurer and recording secretary. Many thanks go to Gar Elison for two good years as president. Bill Hartley then spoke to us for the remainder of the evening on Howard Egan and his influence on trails and roads in the West. Not much has been written of him, and Hartley announced that a book may be forthcoming.

Concerning our Donner Springs projects and the phragmite problem, Terry Welch said that additional applications may be necessary to control the invasive growth. It appears the potash mining issue may not be over as the mining company has appealed the BLM decision. Hopefully we can put that to bed some day. Also, the Dugway Bombing Range enlargement causes us concern.

In our last letter I forgot to mention that T. Michael Smith also participated in the summer BLM filming of trails in Skull Valley and the Salt Deserts of western Utah. Sorry, Michael, for the oversight. The film was shown at the October workshop.

Crossroads received news that Trail Historian *Extraordinaire* Bob Pearce of Elko, Nevada, has passed away. He will be missed and his efforts long remembered. Crossroads sends regards to family and friends.

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Idaho Chapter Spearheads Stage Station Restoration

*By Jerry Eichhorst
IOCTA President and Webmaster*

The past year was a monumental achievement for the chapter in the effort to preserve the Canyon Creek stage station. Partnering with the Idaho Heritage Trust, BLM, and the owners, efforts are well under way to transfer ownership to the BLM. Preservation work was also started and the ends of the structure stabilized over the summer. A highlight of the October chapter meeting was the presentation of a check from IOCTA for \$2,000 to Katherine Kirk, Executive Director of the Idaho Heritage Trust, to be used for the preservation of the Canyon Creek Stage Station. In addition, the chapter approved a program to match personal contributions up to a total of \$2,000 for continuing preservation efforts of the station. I am pleased to report that over \$5,000 has already been raised for this great effort.

From the annual Boise Community Education classes and tour of the Main Oregon Trail Back Country Byway in April to the fall meeting and outing in October, we enjoyed several great outings through the summer. We visited Oregon Trail sites near Massacre Rocks, from Caldwell to Farewell Bend, and at Ditto Creek and Canyon Creek. We installed carsonite markers along the Kelton Road in an area that burned in 2013. Attendance was excellent at all activities with many new

members participating. My thanks to all who helped arrange and participated in these outings. It was a very enjoyable year.

The fall chapter meetings were held on October 4. Noteworthy of the convention planning meeting was the addition of John Briggs as a third co-chairman for the 2016 convention. Tours were discussed and the general concepts and routes agreed upon. In the business meeting Dave Taylor and Lyle Lambert were re-elected as directors of the chapter for another 3-year term each. My thanks to Dave, Lyle, and everyone else, for continuing to help lead the chapter.

Looking ahead to next year's activities, plans have been made to teach the Community Education classes on the byway and North



Alternate Oregon Trail in mid-March in Boise. The spring meeting is being planned for Saturday, May 9, in Fort Hall. We will need to mark trails and firm up bus tour routes in eastern Idaho through the year. Activity updates will be posted on the chapter website at www.IdahoOCTA.org as they become available.

I hope you'll join us on the trails in 2015.



Above right, Bill Wilson presents a IOCTA Treasurer, presents a ceremonial check to Katherine Kirk, Executive Director of the Idaho Heritage Trust, to be used for the preservation of the Canyon Creek Stage Station. Chapter members and others have worked to stabilize the end walls of the station. (Photos by Jerry Eichhorst)



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