

NEWS FROM THE PLAINS

Newsletter of the Oregon-California Trails Association

Winter 2016

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Mountain Meadows Massacre site, Utah

LWCF Wins Reauthorization

Shortly before it adjourned in December, Congress reauthorized the federal Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), with potential funding of \$900 million annually through September 30, 2018.

"While those of us who have worked for years to secure permanent reauthorization of LWCF and guaranteed annual full funding of it are disappointed that Congress will extend it only for three years now, we will have a good start on working with Congressional champions to achieve permanent reauthorization over the next several years," said Gary Werner, Executive Director of the Partnership for the National Trails System.

"Many thanks to all of you who contacted your members of Congress time and again urging them to reauthorize LWCF. Please thank them for including this reauthorization in the FY 2016 Appropriations Bill," he added.

According to Werner, the House and Senate Appropriations Committees allocated \$450 million for LWCF land acquisition projects for 2016. Included through the Bureau of Land Management is \$750,000 for projects on the Oregon National Historic Trail in Oregon and \$1.3 million for the Oregon National Historic Trail in Idaho. In addition, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service has a \$2.5 million line item for projects on the California National Historic Trail in Idaho.

Symposium, Board Meeting Scheduled For St. George

OCTA will host a special symposium focusing on Southern Utah trails in conjunction with its Mid-Year Board Meeting in St. George, Utah, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, March 18-20.

The Board of Directors meeting will be held on Friday, with an evening reception during which Edward Leo Lyman will provide an overview of Washington County and St. George history.

Scheduled Saturday morning speakers:

- Stephen Madsen - "Old Spanish Trail Into Utah by the Southern Branch"
- David Miller - "Expeditionary Artists on the Old Spanish Trail"
- Wade Allinson - "Salina Canyon to Eld Mountain (Moab), Including First Wagon Travel from Anglo-American Travelers, 1849 to 1858"

Afternoon speakers include:

- Robert Leonard - "Fish Lake Cutoff of the Old Spanish Trail"
- David Ogden - "Jedidiah Smith Through Utah, 1826-27"
- Edward Leo Lyman - "The Old Spanish Trail from Salina into Arizona"

The keynote speaker at Saturday's dinner will be T. Michael Smith, who will speak on the Mountain Meadows Massacre.

The symposium will close on Sunday with separate tours (by car caravan) of Mountain Meadows and the section of trail from Utah to Virgin Hill in Nevada.

The symposium will be held at the Best Western Plus Abbey Inn in St. George. Registration for the symposium is available on line by visiting octa-trails.org. To reserve a room at the hotel, call (435) 652-1234. Be sure to ask for the special OCTA rate of \$118 per night.

Arizona Symposium: See Page 4

FROM THE PRESIDENT



By [John Winner](#)
OCTA President

A special thanks to those that were able to attend the 33rd annual OCTA convention in Lake Tahoe in September. From the exit polls, the convention was well received and preliminary estimates indicate that revenue expectations were met. The

annual convention, the various chapter symposiums and events held throughout the year are testimonies to the educational values of the organization and the ongoing effort to share the emigrant experience. Member support of events and activities plus your financial contributions are greatly appreciated. Thanks again for your support.

One of OCTA's primary goals is trail preservation. A frequent comment that I received at the convention from some of our "mature" members was "I'd like to do more, but I can't do some of the things I used to. How can I help?"

Well there is a lot more that can be done beside "boots on the ground". Goal 5 of OCTA's mission in the Strategic Plan is: *Keep OCTA's base membership energized (Don't let the fire go out)*. There are a lot of days that mine is barely smoldering, but the passion to protect the emigrant trail legacy, promoting education and public awareness of the trails keeps the fire going. Along those lines probably for every one hour spent in the field, discovering, mapping and marking historic trails, ten

hours are devoted to the research it takes before the boots are on the ground looking for trail segments. Perhaps it's like a jigsaw puzzle. The more you know about an emigrant trail the more pieces to the puzzle you will have and eventually it will make a picture.

Trail research can take on many aspects. Emigrant diaries and journals are a firsthand accounting; other sources are books, publications, letters, newspapers, libraries, museums, historical societies, General Land Office Maps and Surveyor Notes, other historical maps, aerial photos, family collections, and the list goes on. The point here is that there are many aspects to locating and preserving historical trails and there is something for everyone. It's amazing what's available on the internet, right at your fingertips or "mouse"

The mass emigrant migration in the mid nineteenth century fostered a historic emigrant trail legacy that needs to be captured, preserved and shared with others. Routes taken, equipment used, what they witnessed, stories told, genealogy, successes, and failures and so on.

Some like to work alone, but here is an opportunity to meet with other trail enthusiasts. Propose a chapter project, form a coffee clutch, an Internet party, have a potluck. Share your findings with others. You may be amazed at what transpires when brainstorming a research project, let alone the comradery with other trail folks. *Don't let the fire go out.....*

More to come.....

NEWS FROM THE PLAINS

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PRESERVATION

Warnings on Platte River Project

By Jere L. Krakow, National Preservation Officer

Through the course of the past two years OCTANs have noted a project along the Platte River in central Nebraska that would create two sizable reservoirs ostensibly for the purpose of regulating the flow of water for irrigation and wildlife management.

The J-2 project would inundate the south side routes of the Oregon, California and Pony Express National Historic Trails, destroying sites related to road ranches, the Plum Creek Massacre, and ruts of the trails on the upper or west end of the project area. The critical negative impact or potential effect would eliminate the setting of the trail.

Looking across the flood plain now is to see modern agricultural fields with the low hills on the south defining the edge of the flood plain, and the tree line along the Platte River. Imagine two large reservoirs covering the plain with a large dam on the eastern edge to prevent reservoir waters from inundating the Plum Creek Cemetery, a historic site associated with the trail routes.

At present the cost overruns have slowed the project considerably and the Nebraska Resource District proponents have not elevated it to the point of assessing impacts. Through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), compliance with federal law and policy requires assessment of impacts on resources of the site and setting of the routes of historic trails if public funds are utilized. OCTA has requested consulting party status and has been in communication with the State Historic Preservation Office. From inception the Nebraska Chapter of OCTA is active in monitoring the project.

Another Nebraska project which surfaced last summer is a proposed routing of a Nebraska Public Power District transmission line that impacts many resources, including the historic trail ruts near Sutherland and those nearby on the opposite side of the Platte River. Through consistent and sustained efforts by OCTA members, especially Linda Tacey, the impacts of the proposed route have been called forth. The ranching community of the Nebraska Sandhills is on record of opposing the powerline in the area north of the Platte and OCTA has spoken forcefully about the impacts too.

With participation by key Nebraska Chapter members, a delegation toured the ruts near the eastbound rest area of I-80 near Sutherland this Fall and learned firsthand the potential impacts of the proposed routing. The line would cross the area from south to north then extend eastward through the Sandhills to another substation. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is a key partner in assessing the impacts. OCTA will continue to closely monitor the

proposed alignment through active members of the Nebraska Chapter.

As of this writing, we are still waiting for final recommendations from the federal government on the Boardman to Hemingway (B2H) high voltage powerline. OCTA has forcefully spoken out about the alignment which would compromise the Oregon Trail in Idaho and especially Oregon. (See story below.)

Other projects with potential impacts are ongoing in Nevada, Utah and Wyoming and are also being monitored by OCTA members, in particular by chapter preservation officers. We all make a big contribution through efforts such as these in monitoring and reporting on projects in the chapter regions as we carry out the mission of OCTA. Please notify chapter and national preservation officers of any developments that have the potential to impact trail resources.

B2H Waiting Game Continues

As this issue of *News From The Plains* went to press in late December, the Bureau of Land Management along with Idaho Power and consultants continue to meet in the development of the Final Environmental Impact Statement on the Boardman-Hemingway power line (B2H).

We know that they are reviewing and studying suggestions made in the nearly 400 comments received by the BLM in response to the Draft EIS.

The Final EIS should respond to these comments, correct and add information obtained after preparation of the Draft EIS, and most important will identify the BLM preferred route.

OCTA and others will then have 60 days after the Final is issued (probably in the first quarter of 2016) to respond prior to the BLM issuing a Record of Decision.

If the BLM proposes Land Use Plan Amendments, which they did in the Draft, those amendments require only a 30-day response period. The BLM will have public meetings, usually in Baker City, La Grande, Pendleton and other eastern Oregon locations. Keep posted, we need your help!

Idaho Power is required to prepare an Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) every two years, identifying sufficient resources to reliably serve the growing demand for energy for a 20-year planning period. The IRP is presented to both the Idaho and Oregon Public Utilities Commission. This is another 655-page document.

(Continued on Page 15)

Southern Trails Symposium will Focus on Arizona Routes

Arizona trails will be the focus on the Southern Trails Chapter's Annual Conference and Symposium scheduled April 6-9 in Willcox, Arizona, at the Willcox Community Center.

Southern Trails Chapter



Events begin on Wednesday evening with a dinner and keynote remarks by John Langelier on *Buffalo Soldier Trails: Roads to Equal Rights*.

Thursday speakers (schedule subject to change) include Kathy Klump: *History of Willcox, 1880 to Statehood*; Tom Sutak: *Cooke's Wagon Road*; Richard Collins: *Presidios of Tucson & Tubac Guarding the Overland Trail*; Suzanne Moody: *Fort Bowie Guarding the Trail*; Steve Gregory: *Fort Huachuca*; Mary Kasulaitis: *Trails of Arivaca*; Doug Hocking: *The Black Legend of Lieutenant George Bascom*; and Gerald Ahnert: *Butterfield Overland Mail in Arizona*.

Friday speakers include Daniel Judkins: *Antoine Leroux, Beaver Trapper and Guide in Arizona*; Tom Prezelski: *Californio Native Cavalry*; and Bill Cavaliere: *Cooke's Wagon Road through Guadalupe Canyon*; plus others.

Friday evening's dinner speaker will be Cathy Klump on *Vin Fizz* and field trips are planned on Saturday to Fort Bowie and Dragoon Springs Station.

Registration details were being finalized at press time. For updates, visit doughocking.com and click on the Southern Trails Chapter link.

OCTA Board Election Nominations Sought

Nominations are being accepted through February 15 for election to OCTA's National Board of Directors. Three Directors will be elected. Directors serve for three-year terms and may serve no more than two consecutive terms.

Directors whose terms expire at the National Convention in 2016 are Billy Symms of Washington, Dick Nelson of Kansas and Don Hartley of Wyoming. All three are eligible to run for second three-year terms.

Members of the Board are responsible for setting policies and priorities for the organization and electing officers. They also serve as important liaisons with OCTA chapters and can represent the interests of their chapters at Board meetings.

Directors are expected to attend two Board meetings annually one of which is held in conjunction with the Annual Convention in August. The second, Mid-Year meeting, usually in late winter or early spring, is held in rotating locations.

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 Nominating & Leadership Committee Chair John Krizek at jkrizek33@gmail.com or mailed to him 1190 Tanglewood Road, Prescott AZ 86303.

For more information about the elections process or the job you may also contact other members of the Nomination & Leadership Committee members, Duane Iles at 96cruisin@embarqmail.com or Barb Netherland at bjneth49@gmail.com.

Additional information may also be found in the Members Area of the [OCTA website](http://www.octa-trails.org).

Time to Start Thinking About Awards!

Nominations will be due June 1 for the annual OCTA awards to be presented at the 2016 Convention at Fort Hall, Idaho.

Awards for OCTA members include the Greg Franzwa Meritorious Achievement Award and the Elaine McNabney Distinguished Volunteer Award. Non-members are eligible for Distinguished Service Awards and Friend of the

Trail Award.

Awards nomination forms can be found on the OCTA website by visiting www.octa-trails.org/activity-forms.

Questions about the awards process should be addressed to Dick Nelson, Awards Committee Chair, at kcnelson42@sbcglobal.net.

FROM THE ASSOCIATION MANAGER



As we look forward into 2016, it's always helpful to take a glance back at the foundation we've laid for what comes next. In particular, we made incredible strides in reaching out to youth audiences. There are many achievements to celebrate:

- In March, we launched the new OCTA Journals website at www.octa-journals.org featuring hundreds of original trail journals
 - We partnered with the National Frontier Trails Museum and Independence School District to utilize the new website in creating new curriculum focused on primary source material
 - We created a short 5-minute film detailing how the educational program works
 - We were fortunate to be able to include former board member Dave Vixie's 33 junior high students at the Tahoe convention, including making them all youth members of OCTA after they drove a wagon train through the deserts of Nevada and over the Sierra into California
 - We conducted outreach at the National Council on Social Studies conference in New Orleans, where we were able to reach nearly 4,000 teachers and administrators regarding the Journals website as well as *In Pursuit of a Dream* film website, our Census of Overland Emigrant Documents program and its companion Paper Trail website, and the resources available at the main OCTA website. This is an ongoing effort to spread the creation of new curriculum utilizing the Journals website and other resources. OCTA Education Committee co-chairs Audrey Elder and Matt Mallinson staffed the booth, and are now planning a workshop for next year's conference in Washington, DC
 - OCTA co-sponsored a symposium in conjunction with the Topeka Symphony Orchestra at Alcove Spring with nearly 2,000 people in attendance
 - We continued making significant progress on the 3-Trails Corridor project in KC, seeking to build a 40-mile retracement trail in the historic trail corridor in the KC metro area
 - Worked in conjunction with the Utah BLM to host three interns to help inventory (and protect) the Hastings Cutoff
 - We sponsored myriad Boy Scout and Eagle Scout projects at Alcove Spring in Kansas, trail sites in Independence and Sugar Creek, Missouri, and several projects through the state of Idaho
 - Continued providing input into the Boardman to Hemingway project in Oregon and Idaho, including many feature news stories (such as <http://tinyurl.com/z78psuh> from the Baker City Herald that featured OCTA member Gail Carbiener)
 - We won the Kansas City Area Realtors Association "Placemaking Grant" to enhance Cave Spring in Raytown with two new stone benches and three new trail signs
 - OCTA is seeking "consulting party" status for the J-2 Reservoir project in central Nebraska (Plum Creek area south of the Platte River) It is a diversion dam project to even the flow of water in the Platte
 - Created a delay and reassessment of a Nebraska Public Power District transmission line that was said to be "final", however it is not. USFWS and OCTA's Nebraska Chapter is engaged, and a NEPA requirement of assessing impacts is about to be undertaken. The powerline was to cross the Sutherland ruts at the eastbound rest area on I-80 west of North Platte. There are outstanding ruts adjacent to the rest area on private land. The sandhills ranching community is very vocally opposed.
 - We had our best internal fund-raising effort in OCTA history during FY 2014-15
 - We saw slight membership growth this summer due to all of the aforementioned efforts
 - And finally, we enjoyed successful Lake Tahoe convention in September, with about 400 attendees and earnings that surpassed revenue expectations
- Now we excitedly look forward to 2016 and all that we have planned. First up is our Spring Symposium in St. George, Utah from March 18-20, followed by our Southern Trails Chapter Symposium in Willcox, Arizona from April 6-9. OCTA is working with the Santa Fe Trail Association, Kansas City Area Historic Trails Association, and the Lewis & Clark Trail Heritage Foundation to help plan the Partnership for the National Trails System's Historic Trails Workshop in Independence, Missouri from June 6-10. We have planned two separate National Park Service Centennial Events in conjunction with the Workshop, including the dedication of the 1927 Avard Fairbanks Bronze Oregon Trail Medallion at the Historic Truman Courthouse in Independence and the dedication of the nation's first pedestrian bridge built over an interstate specifically for National Historic Trails in Kansas City. And of course, the highlight of the year will be OCTA's Annual Convention at Fort Hall, Idaho from August 1-5, which will be followed month later by a reprise of the Topeka Symphony Orchestra and

(continued on page 15)

UTAH CROSSROADS

With summer and fall behind us, we can now reflect on our activities and accomplishments of 2015.

We had three successful membership meetings with very interesting speakers. We had a board and membership meeting wherein the makeup of our officers was discussed, and they were reinstalled. They will stay another year with one exception – Craig Fuller will step down as secretary. We will need to fill that position soon. Many thanks to Craig for his services, and thanks to Mike Landon for obtaining speakers. Also, thanks to him for pinch-hitting for us when another speaker had emergency surgery. Thanks, Mike.

We had three post-setting days in June, September and October. We set nine rail posts on three trails in Utah – the Hasting Road, the Central Overland Trail, and Hensleys Salt Lake Cutoff. A good and successful year! Thanks for the willingness to supply labor and to Jesse Petersen for providing the necessary materials and historical information.

We were glad to hear we had good representation at the convention at South Lake Tahoe and were pleased that three of our members received awards – T. Michael Smith, Dixon Ford and the late Al Mulder (posthumously). His daughter, Penny, accepted the award. And, as always, we were glad to see Richard Wilkes from England in attendance.

Salt Lake County BLM has given awards to several Crossroads members for Volunteer Public Service in support of the California National Historic Trail. The awards were presented by BLM Recreational Specialist Ray Kelsey to Chuck Milliken, Jesse Petersen, A. Oscar Olson, Terry Welsh, Gar Elison, Vic Heath, T. Michael Smith and Bryce Billings.

Our fall field trip was a two-day event (October 9-10) centered around City of Rocks, Granite Pass, Idaho and the Goose Creek/Thousand Springs area of Northeast Nevada. We were not able to complete the Granite Pass part. After an overnight stay at Burley, Idaho, we were ready for the Nevada portion which included a hike into Birch Creek and a stop at Records Bluff. This is a site at Goose Creek where hundreds of pioneers carved their names during the period of the 1840s to the 1860s. Some are sluffing off, but a good portion still exist. After stops along the Goose Creek/Thousand Springs Valley, we reached pavement at US-93 in Nevada and headed to Wells for gas, supper and our return to Utah locations via I-80. Thanks to Gar Elison and Terry Welsh for their leadership on the trip.

The BLM/NPS are exploring ideas to make some of our historical trails through Utah as recreational trails. We are supportive of this idea and look forward to being a part of this endeavor.

I, too, have been busy donating Al Mulder's papers, maps, etc., to the Utah Historical Society, which is our repository.

P.S Nothing yet on Echo Canyon ladders (see story in the Fall NFP).

-- Oscar Olson



*Crossroads post-setting crew at Emigrant Springs,
Box Elder County, Utah.*

Mapping & Marking

The 57-member OCTA Mapping & Marking committee is continuing to make great progress in preserving and protecting important trail locations, thanks to work by chapters, individual volunteers and support from the National Park Service.

Here are a couple of highlights from 2015:

In **Utah**, Jess Petersen (Utah) is continuing work on the Central Overland Trail, walking and, in some cases, driving the trail while noting and obtaining GPS coordinate data and the location of features and artifacts. Data is entered on USGS quad maps using the TNP program.

Jess is coordinating the Utah Crossroads Chapter's efforts in placing rail post markers on the Central Overland Trail. During 2015, markers were installed at the site of Indian Ford on the Jordan River near Lehi; near the headquarters area of Camp Floyd in Cedar Valley; on the bank of Settlement Creek in Tooele City; and at the junction of the Pony Express trail and the road to Government Springs in Skull Valley.

In **Wyoming**, Randy Brown continues to lead local efforts. Last spring and summer he was out on the "River Route" or "Military Road" branch of the trail west of Casper. Randy renewed or replaced markers he had installed in various years, some as long as 25 years ago. In addition, a new highway bypass, which bisects the segment, took out some 200 yards of one branch of trail and about a hundred yards on the other one. The highway department removed three Carsonite markers during construction, but reinstalled two of them, one at a point where no trail remains, the other where there is a nice swale.

IDAHO CHAPTER

Snow is already falling as we wrap up another year in IOCTA. Although our year was not full of exciting outings as I know we would have liked, it was still busy and productive.

The many years of work with the Canyon Creek stage station came to fruition this fall with the transfer of ownership from private owners to the BLM. With funding and support of the BLM, additional signage can be installed and the structure and grounds can be restored to their former appearance. My thanks to the Norstebon family, the Idaho Heritage Trust, and the BLM for making this transfer possible. Donations are still be accepted for the restoration effort.

I am happy to see the new members this year becoming involved in the chapter and helping with the convention planning. We continue to grow and create new friendships. I encourage all of you to join us on outings and meetings next year.

I cannot express enough thanks to John Briggs and Dan Dunne for their great work in planning the convention for next year. And to their wives for their assistance and tolerance. The plans for the convention are coming along slowly, but steadily. We seem to often be waiting on others to get their tasks finished. We're still short-handed with several committees needing leaders. We also need assistants and chase vehicle drivers for the bus tours on Friday. This winter will be busy writing documents and pulling the pieces together. Please consider getting involved and helping create a special convention. Contact John Briggs if you can help with the convention.

Based on feedback at our table at the Lake Tahoe convention, interest in Fort Hall is extremely high so we should have very good attendance. We sold a lot of shirts in Tahoe but still have more to sell. Please reach out to Dan and pick one up.

Our fall chapter meeting was held in November, a little later than usual due to the OCTA convention being later than usual. It was a good meeting, and as always, good to see everyone. We filled all of our open positions as more of our newer members stepped up. I thank everyone who is willing to help lead the chapter.

Activities are already being planned for next year. I'll be teaching Community Education classes in March with a tour of the byway in April. I'll also be teaching a couple of classes and conducting tours for the Osher Institute in April and June. Our spring meeting is scheduled for Saturday, May 7, at the Fort Hall Event Center. Please mark your calendars and plan on joining us.

Have a great fall and winter. I hope to see you again in the spring.

-- Jerry Eichhorst



Transfer ceremonies for the Canyon Creek stage station. Built in 1874 along the Oregon Trail, the station served travelers on the Overland and Kelton Roads. The Stanley and Mildred Norstebon family gifted the historic stage station to the Bureau of Land Management along the Main Oregon Trail Back Country Byway. Restorations efforts have been a partnership of the Norstebon family, the Idaho Heritage Trust and the Idaho Chapter of OCTA.

Fort Hall Convention Update

*Oregon-California Trails Association
NATIONAL CONVENTION 2016*



A tentative schedule has been developed for the 2016 OCTA National Convention scheduled August 1-5 at Fort Hall, Idaho. The convention theme is a focus on Native American history and culture and how the influx of emigrants and fur trappers

changed their lives forever. The Fort Hall Shoshone-Bannock Tribe is actively participating in planning.

Pre-convention tours on Sunday, July 31, include the Hudspeth Cutoff and the Oregon Trail from Soda Springs to Fort Hall. Post-convention tours on August 6 include Goodale's Cutoff and the California Trail to Utah.

Tours during the convention include trapper sites in eastern Idaho, separate tours of the Oregon Trail east and west of Fort Hall, a walking tour of the Milner Ruts, and a scenic Idaho tour through Big Spring, Upper Mesa Falls, Harriman State Park and the Snake River.

Speakers during the convention will touch on Fort Hall and the fur trappers, Shoshone-Bannock history, Idaho diaries, the discovery of South Pass, Goodale's Cutoff and the Lander Road. The annual Awards Banquet will be held on Tuesday, Authors' Night is Wednesday and the OCTA Board of Directors will meet on Monday.

More details and registration information will be included in the Spring edition of *News From The Plains*. You can also visit www.octa-trails.org/chapters/idaho.

NORTHWEST

Fall has been a quiet time for Northwest OCTA. Elections for officers and one director will be occurring in December (after the NFP deadline).

Plans for next year's outings on the trails of Oregon and Washington are in the works but not yet finalized. Proposals for two trail symposia are being considered. Lethene Parks has suggested holding one in Vancouver, Washington, and California-Nevada president Mark Wilson would like to hold a joint symposium, possibly in the Medford area, looking at the trail that connected California and Oregon before the Gold Rush.

Randy Brown will place an OCTA marker at the grave of Ann Roelofson Scott, who died of cholera June 20, 1852 at Box Elder Springs, Wyoming. The marker will be framed in concrete since the landowner prefers a ground-level marker placed over the grave. Ann was the mother of Abigail Scott Duniway, also in that 1852 wagon train, who later became a prominent leader in the fight for women's rights and suffrage in Oregon and the northwest.

The Oregon segment of the Trail Inventory Project that Dave Welch undertook for the National Park Service in 2014 has been completed. Teams went out across the state led by Gail Carbiener on the east side, Stafford Hazelett across the Blues, Dave's team in central Oregon to The Dalles, and Paul Masee and Henry Pittock finishing up from The Dalles to Oregon City. The data have been compiled for presentation to NPS. We'll hear more from Dave Welch on this in the future.

-- Dennis Larsen

Visit OCTA on the Internet

OCTA-trails.org

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OCTA-journals.org

OCTA Bookstore:

www.OCTA-trails.org/store/

GATEWAY



Board members of Gateway Chapter include (L to R): Bill Leppert, President Carole McClellan, Cindy Weaver, Secretary Sandy Smith, Vice-President Corky Smith, and Glendon Hartman. Not shown is Treasurer Fred Sawin.

The Gateway Chapter ended its year with events in October and November.

In October, the group met at Whistle Creek Animal Preserve operated by Jim Yount and Cindy Weaver. A hayride through the preserve was taken to view the various breeds of cattle and the oxen. The program was presented by Karen McClellan, who followed the 1853 overland journals of sisters Agnes Stewart and Helen Stewart as well as a letter from Elizabeth Stewart.

The Stewarts reached St. Joseph on April 5, 1853, and camped with their party two miles east of St. Joseph on a creek. The party "jumped off" from St. Joseph on May 3. McClellan read excerpts from the Stewart's diary which gave a poignant view of the difficult, seven-and-a-half month journey from their Pennsylvania home.

The party reached Oregon and Agnes' last entry was September 11. She married and settled in Fall Creek. Photos for the program were supplied by descendants of Agnes Stewart Warner. McClellan also noted that today Agnes is honored with the name of Agnes Stewart Middle School in Springfield, Oregon.

In November, Gateway held its annual membership dinner meeting. President Carole McClellan presented the copies of three signs to replace those vandalized at the St. Joseph River Front Park. The signs surround a flag pole and are dedicated to Joseph Robidoux, the Pony Express, and the Oregon and California Trails. Gateway was partnered in funding by the Missouri Questers. A spring rededication of the sign is planned. The program of the evening was presented by Joy Baker who gave a first-person portrayal of Pelagie Robidoux, sister of St. Joseph founder and fur trader.

- Jackie Lewin

000T on for September 4



Mark your calendars for Sunday, September 4, the date of the second edition of "Orchestra on the Oregon Trail" at Alcove Spring Historic Park.

The Marshall County Arts

Cooperative recently confirmed the

date. The inaugural concert in 2015 attracted a crowd of about 1,600.

The concert will feature the Topeka Symphony Orchestra. Stay tuned for more information.

Dates Set for Iowa Convention

Tentative dates of August 8-12 have been finalized for the 2017 OCTA Convention in Council Bluffs, Iowa.

The convention will focus on jumping off points for the California, Oregon and Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trails.

Attendees will also hear about the Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail, the Lincoln Highway, and the trancontinental railroad, plus more.



KANZA



A large effort by KANZA member Duane Durst and his historian friends, Doug Tippin and the late Dan Coombs, to preserve, mark and interpret Mormon Springs has recently been completed. Mormon Springs was a well-known campsite on the trail connecting Fort Riley with Fort Kearny.

They have been mapping remnants of the trail to document it for potential inclusion in the national trails. Mormons used the trail in the 1840's to reach the Mormon Trail in Nebraska. Duane and the chapter raised the funds to create the beautiful signage and marker along the highway near the spring site.

Reminiscences of a long time resident from 1935, tell of following the wagon "ruts" and seeing carvings on a sandstone ledge at the spring. The story goes on to tell of a grave of a traveler that had been found by a farmer plowing the ground. Duane had researched this branch for many years while curator of the Hollenberg Pony Express Station looking for other campsites. Duane also discovered two hand dug wells on his farm nearby. Clyde Dile of Scandia, representing the LDS church, said that digging such wells was typical.

Durst, with his colleagues and donors have created a beautiful and informative monument to this important trail site.

— Duane Iles



TRAILS HEAD

As newly elected President of Trails Head chapter I'm finding that events I have just attended in the past, I will now have the opportunity to tell about. The Kansas City Metro area, being the "trail" center for four existing trails (Oregon, California, Santa Fe and Lewis & Clark) gives one many opportunities to be involved with all of them at some point as they intersect across the state line.

With many of our local members being a part of all these organizations, we have decided to incorporate at least one of our meetings as a joint venture. The three local organizations are: Missouri River Outfitters, (Santa Fe Trail Association -SFTA) Larry Short, MRO-President; Kansas City Area Historic Trails Association (KCAHTA) Gary Hicks, President, and Trails Head Chapter (OCTA). This will be a very workable partnership as we all promote the same basic mission of preservation and interpretation of our local historic trails.

Congratulations to our chapter members Pat Traffas, newly elected National Vice President and Sandra Wiechert, newly elected National Secretary. Matt Mallinson was elected to the Board of Directors and Dick Nelson will continue to serve on the Board. We have a very strong showing of leadership in OCTA and proud to have these members elected to the positions they will hold.

The National OCTA Convention at South Lake Tahoe was well attended by Trails Head members; we had approximately 17 members present. Everyone enjoyed the activities of the convention. Most of the members flew out, but I enjoyed the adventure of traveling by car. It never ceases to amaze me how the early emigrants managed to travel those same stretches of miles in far worse conditions than by car. What a hardy and determined group they were! Driving through the high desert once was enough for me.

The spring and summer months will bring forth several activities that we will be involved with. As these unfold the story will be told. Kansas City offers many opportunities to be involved with the trails retracement from the 3-Trails Corridor project to signage through Johnson County KS to Gardner Junction. Our members who live in Douglas County are also working on a new signage project of the Oregon Trail through Lawrence, KS. There is never a lack of tasks to accomplish. What we do today will help ensure the history of the trails will live on for the next generation.

-- Jean Coupal-Smith

Scouts March on Alcove Spring



Upwards of 200 Boy Scouts will be at Alcove Spring April 8-10 for the Oregon Trail District Camporee.

Scouts have been getting progressively more involved at the historic site during the past year. Earlier this year Marysville KS Troop 180 camped for a weekend.

The scouts helped install new signage and scout Nicholas Ottens is leading construction of a permanent bathroom facility as he attempts to qualify for his Eagle Scout badge.

Pictured above are, L to R, Troop 180 members Clayton Pils, Jacob Richardson and Brendan Lyhanne with Nathan Ottens in back.

NFP: Electronically

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OCTA Reps Headed to D.C. in February With Trails Partners

By Jere Krakow

OCTA PNTS Representative

As in years past, OCTA will have representatives at the PNTS annual meeting in Washington, D.C., on February 6-7, and on Capitol Hill during "Hike the Hill" on February 8-11. It is a great opportunity to network with federal agencies, members of Congress and their staffs in support of the overland Trails.

OCTA representatives will continue to emphasize the need for a Study bill for the Southern Trails and authorization of recommended additional routes that are being finalized by the National Park Service and will be reported to Congress. The additional routes include many along both the Oregon and California Trails not included in past authorizing legislation.

OCTA is a member of the Partnership for the National Trails System (PNTS), the nation's strongest advocacy organization for the National Trails System, which has a leadership role in Hike The Hill activities.

In the course of the past year, the PNTS has demonstrated a longstanding commitment to achieving funding support for the System through Congressional appropriations to federal agencies.

A key part of the PNTS strategy strives to maintain key working relationships with federal agencies primarily with the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land

Management, and the USDA Forest Service. This key partnership remains very solid and substantial.

The very important metric in all of the work by the PNTS and member organizations like OCTA, is the contribution of volunteer hours and dollars. In 2014 the aggregate total of volunteer hours across the nation equaled 1,054,022 hours valued at \$23,768,196 for the National Trails System. OCTA's significant share totaled 100,379 hours valued at \$2,263,546, with private contributions of \$686,060.

These impressive statistics resonate with members of Congress, demonstrating the leverage that OCTA volunteers contribute year after year, which translates into funding support to carry out our mission.

Please continue to track, record and report your volunteer hours each month so the numbers may be totaled at year-end and sent to your local chapter or to OCTA headquarters for compilation nationwide.

This calendar year the dues for member organizations of the PNTS have been raised. For OCTA the dues increase based upon membership of the organization, has increased from \$1,400 to \$2,200, or about 60 cents per member per year. Supporting the National Trails System through OCTA membership in the PNTS is very important, particularly with potential legislation forthcoming.

A Good Time to Give

By Melissa Shaw Jones

OCTA Fundraising Chair

When they packed the wagon for the long trip West, they tried to take things that would be helpful on the journey or when they got to the promised land. They had to plan and prepare for the long journey knowing there wouldn't be much help along the way. How much food can we carry? How do we store water? We will need warm clothes. Do we really need to take the cast iron stove?

As they made their way across the trail, they would leave behind the things that no longer were mandatory as the journey became more difficult. The journals documented the daily struggles with sadness over

leaving sentimental heirlooms that were simply too heavy or impractical to hold onto.

Even today we struggle with the things we accumulate in life, and the collections of items that are valuable to us, even if they don't have substantial monetary value. We've been fortunate that OCTA has provided us with like-minded individuals and many of the lifetime collections donated to OCTA will remain together for others to enjoy through the years ahead.

We live our lives with purpose and leave this world a better place for others. Our pioneer spirit lives on in the work we do and the work we did. We support OCTA with our membership and with our actions. Thank you for helping to keep the trail alive through the past

Save the Trail

FROM OCTA HEADQUARTERS

Thank You!

Thanks to many donors who support the work of OCTA through gifts to our annual fund drive and memorial gifts to those who have passed. Gifts in the last several months include those from:

Harry Abraham	Richard H Lachmann
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James King	Melvin & Ellen Sweet
Mary Korpi	David & Kay Taylor
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Welcome New OCTA Members

William Ackerman, Upton, WY
Robert Baker, Beaverton, OR
Lynette Banks, Draper, UT
Bob Butler, Grass Valley, CA
Paul Calverley, Boise, ID
Ken & Heather Eagon, Portland, OR
Christine Ellin, Virginia Beach, VA
Glenn Hadley, San Lorenzo, CA
John Heron, Cupertino, CA
Al Hooker, Prairie Village, KS
Charles Hutcheson, Santa Rosa, CA
Amy Johnson, Evergreen, CO
Dean Kayler, Palm Desert, CA
Joanne Kent, Pocatello, ID
Sean Martin, El Cerrito, CA
Tom C Maynor, Meridian, MS
Ali McCarty, Grants Pass, OR
Eileen Pape, Fort Collins, CO
Kristine Petersen, Littleton, CO
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legacy-society](http://www.octa-trails.org/preserve/trails-legacy-society)

Calendar of Upcoming Events

February 6-11: Hike The Hill and Partnership For The National Trails System, Washington, D.C.

March 17: OCTA Board of Directors, Mid-Year Meeting, St. George, Utah

March 17-19: OCTA Symposium, St. George, Utah

April 6-9: Southern Trails Chapter Symposium, Willcox, AZ.

April 29-May 1: CA-NV Chapter Symposium, Susanville, CA

June 4: National Trails Day, various locations

June 4-6: Trails Days, California Trails Interpretive Center, Elko NV

June 6-10: Partnership for the National Trails System, Historic Trails Workshop, Kansas City.

June 15-25: National Pony Express Re-ride, various locations

August 1-5: OCTA National Convention, Ft. Hall, Idaho

September 4: Orchestra on the Oregon Trail, Alcove Spring

Business Sponsorships

For just \$50 a year, you can become a business sponsor, connecting your business to tourists following the trails.

Business sponsors receive a listing on the OCTA website, a window decal, a framed wall certificate and an OCTA trail map. To learn more, contact OCTA headquarters at (816) 252-2276.

Current business sponsors include:

Heritage Inn Express, 1155 Pony Express Hwy, Marysville, KS

Little Hap's Bar and Grill, 211 2nd St, Home, KS

Scotts Bluff Area Visitors Bureau, 2930 Old Oregon Trail Rd, Gering, NE

Wagon Wheel Café, 703 Broadway, Marysville, KS

Surveyor Scherbel, Ltd, P O Box 96, Big Piney, WY

State Bank of Blue Rapids, P O Box 157, Blue Rapids, KS

Lew Printing, 227-B East College St-LL, Independence, MO

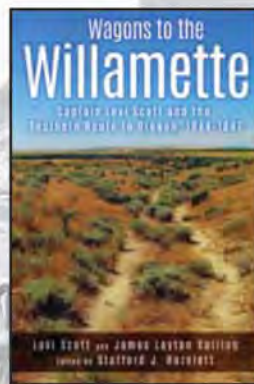
First Commerce Bank, 902 Broadway, Marysville, KS

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A Lovely & Comfortable Heritage Lost, History of Early El Dorado County, California by Ellen Osborn, \$21.95



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The Great Medicine Road, Narratives of Oregon, California and Mormon Trails, Part 1 and 2, (only Part 1 shown), edited by Michael L. Tate, \$39.95 each.



Final Ten Miles to Donner Springs, The Hastings Cutoff Trail to Donner Springs & Pilot Peak by Roy D. Tea, \$16.00

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REMEMBRANCES



Lee Underbrink

A former two-term member of OCTA's Board of Directors, Lee Underbrink died November 28 Casper, Wyoming, at the age of 85.

Lee grew up in the Scottsbluff area and was a graduate of Gering High School, Scottsbluff Junior College and the University of Nebraska. He came to

Casper in 1956 when he was transferred by his employer, Masek Auto Supply Co.

He was well-known as an amateur historian specializing in Wyoming and western trails history. He was a lifetime member of OCTA and received the Meritorious Achievement Award, OCTA's highest honor. He was also a past President of the Natrona County Historical Society and a lifetime member of the Wyoming State Historical Society.

Lee led thousands over the Oregon Trail to Martin's Cove and to other trail sites and truly enjoyed sharing his knowledge of history with others.

His wife Marilyn preceded him in death. He is survived by his daughter, Laurel Walton; sons, Scott and David; and five grandchildren.

The family would appreciate memorial contributions in his name to The National Historic Trails Center Foundation in Casper.



Paul Scherbel

OCTA life member Paul N. Scherbel passed away October 22 in Big Piney, Wyoming at the age of 98. A World War II veteran, he grew up in Salt Lake City, where he married his wife, Rachel.

After working for the Soil Conservation Service for 10 years, he started Surveyor Scherbel Ltd. He was active in civic affairs and was a two-term mayor of Big Piney.

Paul served on the Columbia River Basin Commission, the Wyoming Board of Geographical Names, and the Wyoming Board of Registration for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors. He served as county surveyor for Teton, Lincoln and Sublette counties.

He was preceded in death by his wife. He is survived by his three sons Paul, Scott and Marlowe, and one daughter, Annette, plus 32 grandchildren and 77 great-grandchildren.



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Discounts are available for multiple ads.

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It's a great opportunity to reach an audience interested in your message while support OCTA's preservation mission.

For information about advertising in OCTA publications, contact OCTA headquarters at octa@indepmo.org.

Memorial & Tribute Gifts

Memorial and Tribute gifts are wonderful way to recognized the contributions of loved ones to the legacy of the trails.

It can be a meaningful way to leave a legacy on behalf of those whose lives were marked by dedication to our Western heritage.

To make a Memorial or Tribute gift, please visit

[OCTA-trails.org/donate-online](https://octa-trails.org/donate-online).

Association Manager

Continued From Page 5

Symposium at Alcove Spring on the Sunday before Labor Day.

We will, of course, continue monitoring all of the potential trail threats mentioned above, as well as new threats that will surely come onto our radar screen in 2016. We will continue expanding our educational offerings and reaching new youth audiences in school districts all around the country. We plan to continue to push for more Boy Scout projects, and will be reaching out to Girl Scouts, 4-H clubs, and other youth service groups. In this way, we continue to build the next generation of trail advocates. Planning is also already underway for our 2017 convention, which will be our first ever in Iowa (Council Bluffs). We are partnering there with groups dedicated to the history of the railroad, Lincoln Highway, the Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail, and the Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail. We have chosen an incredible riverfront host hotel that is connected with downtown Omaha by a gorgeous pedestrian bridge over the Missouri River. We think you will find this an exciting convention, as we are reaching out to Mormon youth to stage a handcart recreation, we have reached out to the University of Nebraska-Omaha

Boardman-Hemingway

Continued From Page 3

The Oregon PUC in staff analysis has some encouraging comments: *"Staff is concerned that Idaho Power is pursuing a resource portfolio that creates a riskier, and potentially more costly, scenario for ratepayers."* A public meeting will be held in March 2016, and we will be there.

It is important that we keep the project in the public eye and spread our concern as far as possible. To that end, *High Country News*, a magazine that publishes balanced articles about environmental issues in the West, in its February issue will discuss the Oregon Trail and B2H.

In a cold and muddy day in November, my wife Muriel, in her 1852 clothes and I met the reporter and photographer in eastern Oregon. We did our best to describe wind, dust and 100 degree temperatures that the emigrants would have experienced. Let's hope we like the result.

and their masters program in history to reach local high school students, and we are hopeful to have a closing night concert in an amphitheater right on the Missouri River.

Thank you for all you do to help!



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UPCOMING EVENTS

Annual Trail Days – June 4-5, 2016

Western Heritage Festival – August 4-5, 2016

THE CALIFORNIA TRAIL CENTER FOUNDATION

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