

NEWS FROM THE PLAINS

Newsletter of the Oregon-California Trails Association

At the confluence of the Colorado and Gila Rivers
by Lieut. Col. W. H. Emory, made in 1846-7.

Spring 2022

Volume XXXVII, No. 1

FROM THE PRESIDENT



San Diego provided a wealth of experiences for those able to make their way there and attend the symposium and associated activities. The Symposium hotel was close to Old Town San Diego and the Mormon Battalion's 175th anniversary celebrations.

We were able to walk to the Juniper Serra Museum, and hear about the buried ruins of the San Diego Presidio, see Old Fort Stockton and the Mormon Battalion Monument in Presidio Park. A varied and interesting program of presentations were on offer at the Temple Beth Israel in Heritage Park, led off by Michael Connolly Miskwish of the Kumeyaay Nation and closed by Elder Todd Christofferson. On the van tour we followed sections of the Mormon Battalion and Butterfield Trails from the Yuha Desert near Plaster City, into the Anza Borrego State Park, to the Vallecito Stage Station, Box Canyon and Foot & Walker Pass before reaching Warner's Ranch. Attendance was a very satisfactory seventy, despite fourteen late cancellations due to the high incidence of the Omicron variant in San Diego County. The symposium even managed to beat its financial objectives. Thanks to Travis, Laura Anderson, Steve Allison, and to Kevin Henson and Greg Christofferson of the Mormon



Mormon Battalion March into Old Town. Photo by Travis Boley
Battalion for a well delivered experience.

The mid-year Board Meeting took place at the Courtyard Marriott in Old Town. The Board papers are on the website. A marketing proposal from Kevin Marcus (Knowledge Tree Films) and Steve Brown (Sun Runner Media) was discussed at length and will be reviewed by the Marketing Committee.

The OCTA Convention in Casper is taking shape for August 28th through September 2nd. Talks will include the history of South Pass, the Bozeman Trail, the Fur trade and its connection to the trails, and Howard Driggs organization of the 1930 centennial gathering at Independence Rock. Bus Tours will visit Independence

Rock, Devil's Gate, the Bozeman Trail, and Emigrant Gap. Private vehicle tours will include South Pass, Fort Laramie, and the Guernsey Ruts. This is an exciting program that will garner a lot of interest!

The Southern Trails Chapter is planning its symposium in Temecula, CA for April 25, 26 and 27. The California-Nevada Chapter is also planning its Symposium in Andersen, CA May 6 – 8.

There has been progress on the Butterfield Trail as Senators Boozman and Heinrich have submitted the Butterfield Overland NHT Act Bill to the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. Good news, too, as the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) are looking to acquire 4100 acres of private land including portions of the Oregon National Historic Trail at McDonald's Ferry in the John Day River Valley.

The effort on the Boardman to Hemingway transmission line continues. In early January OCTA's Gail Carbiener and Isobel Lingenfelter enjoyed a full day of cross-examination of and by Idaho Power. Gail is now writing his brief for submission to the Administrative Law Judge. You can read about this and other preservation activities in the Preservation Officer's report. Project R in Nebraska is covered there as well. Objections to this project brought up something new for me – the problem of disposal of old wind turbine blades which have a life of between 15 and 25 years. Manufacturers make the blades to withstand hurricane force winds and while they can be recycled, the technology has not been applied on a large scale yet. Approximately 2000 a

year come down in the US and currently find their way into landfills!

In this issue you will find the financial statements for OCTA's fiscal year ending September 30, 2021. You will note one major difference from previous years reports as we work to have consistency of treatment across all our financial reports, including the statements in the News from the Plains. You

will see that chapter financial information is now included where previously it was not.

Noteworthy is the substantial return on our endowment funds investments in 2021 thanks to the work of our Investment Advisory Committee. However, some of that will have been lost during the current stock market downturn.

The 'Journey of a Lifetime' Fundraising project is progressing but is still in the investigative phase.

Membership at the end of 2021 in total was

1259 which is marginally up on the 1236 members at the same time in 2021. Some of the new members are coming in from our Social Media efforts and from States that are not on the Oregon Trail. That is an exciting expansion if we can keep our offer refreshed and interesting to them. You can read about these Social media and Video programs in the Association Manager's report.

As I write this snow is falling in Boise and COVID is still with us, but it will soon be Spring and time to get out on the Trail! I look forward to seeing you there!

John Briggs, President

Oregon-California Trails Association



The Dry Waterfall in Box Canyon. Photo by Lee Black

2021-2022 OCTA Officers

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Steve Allison, Vice President

South Jordan, UT • sallison9999@gmail.com

Lee Black, Past President

Albuquerque, NM • leebblack1@hotmail.com

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FROM THE ASSOCIATION MANAGER



When COVID-19 first started shutting things down across the world in the spring of 2020, we here at OCTA HQ felt the dread that many others were surely feeling – how were we going to survive this financially? We were locked out of our offices. We couldn't hold revenue-generating events. We didn't know how

long this was going to last. What were we going to do?

Fortunately, we'd taken steps in October 2019 that provided the answer to that question. Our marketing and public relations committee had come together for two days to take a deep dive into planning for development of the organization's next strategic plan. We thought through what seemed like a million ideas. We slowly culled the list into something that looked doable over the next five years. We rolled it out at the Yuma board meeting in February 2020 and got buy-in from the board. We returned to OCTA HQ to set to work, and then the world shut down.

It was then that we looked hard at this fresh new marketing plan. It called for launching a YouTube Channel. It called for starting Instagram and Twitter feeds. It called for beefing up our Facebook page, redesigning our websites, diving deep into the world of Google Ads, and creating new partnerships.

Two other fortuitous things happened at about the same time. First, the board agreed to a partnership with Sunrunner Media and Knowledge Tree Films at the Yuma board meeting, primarily to partner on season three of Steve Brown's PBS show Southwest Stories. Historic trails of the American Southwest would be featured. We were all very excited about this new partnership.

Second, OCTA won a grant from the Partnership for the National Trails System to hire an intern. At the marketing meeting the previous October, the committee listed as another goal a desire to hire a digital media intern. We hit a jackpot when we found Sam Sullivan, a recent graduate of William Jewell College in Liberty, Missouri. Sam had a lot of experience in digital media due to his degree program and excellent internship opportunities that helped him gain a lot of experience in an area where OCTA needed help.

So, when we could no longer go to the office, we were left with a laptop and a cell phone. What could

we accomplish?

Well, we accomplished quite a lot. The end result was two consecutive years where we finished financially in the black. We saw a net gain of twenty new members in 2021. But that's the end of the story. How did we do it?

First, Sam and I set to populating our new YouTube channel with short videos. We focused primarily on sites in Kansas and Missouri since we could drive to them rather quickly. We covered historic sites, trail pioneers, and even did a short series on African-Americans and historic trails. Much later in the year, we were able to travel to Arizona and create a slew of videos along the Southern Route as well. (Please subscribe to our channel at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC5CyC-R68Izhvw1f57V-yQ> if you haven't already done so.)

These new videos, in combination with a huge focus on Google Ads and social media, started paying immediate dividends. The National Frontier Trails Museum in Independence was also closed, which meant that our main outlet for selling books and merchandise was also closed. But the ads and social media posts helped us more than replace those lost sales. It also helped us find new members, especially members who were quite a bit younger than our main core of members.

We then began examining grants from state humanities councils. We targeted a few that we thought we could win and wound up winning most of them. From these grants we were able to professionalize our video content. We went from what were essentially no-budget videos to small budget videos, but those small budgets allowed us to hire professional film crews and seek new markets beyond our YouTube Channel.

So of course, we reached out to our partners with Sunrunner Media and Knowledge Tree Films and away we went. The first project was in partnership with the Amargosa Conservancy, a land trust that preserves pristine sections of the Mojave Desert along the Amargosa River just south of Death Valley. We examined the evolution of the Old Spanish Trail, from its millennia of use by American Indians, to its use as a mule-pack trade route between Santa Fe and Los Angeles, to its improvement by Mormons for use as a wagon road, and finally, its role in the California Gold Rush. This 25-minute documentary now runs on KVCR out of San Bernardino for the next five years, meaning our name will have millions of impressions all over Southern California until 2025. It is also showing on FNX (First Nations Experience), a station

managed by American Indians that broadcasts in 25 states with over 75 million subscribers.

We next won a small grant from Missouri Humanities Council (MHC) to create a short film about the Wire Road through Wilson's Creek Battlefield outside of Springfield, Missouri. This was an early wagon road that connected St. Louis to southwest Missouri and northwest Arkansas. The corridor was used, in part, by the Cherokee as part of the Trail of Tears. In the 1850s, it was the route of the Butterfield Overland Stage. As it connected to Ft. Smith, Arkansas, it was an important route to take emigrants to this southern jumping off point to California as well. It was also the site of the second major battle of the Civil War.

With the money we received from MHC, we were able to create a 13-minute video. However, we quickly realized we had more than enough great footage to elongate this into a 25-minute piece that would be attractive to PBS. In order to stretch it out to this length, though, we would need to engage our video editor with further work. We would need about \$5,000 to get it to PBS length, so if you would like to help underwrite these final costs we would happily give you a production credit!

Finally, we won a grant from the South Dakota Humanities Council to create a documentary about Doug Hansen, proprietor of Hansen Wheel & Wagon in Letcher, South Dakota. Doug and his team of a dozen craftsmen restore and build wagons and stagecoaches. Outside of Amish craftsmen living in small villages that dot the American countryside, Doug is one of the very few people in the United States keeping alive this 19th century transportation technology. He has supplied wagons and stagecoaches (as well as repair services) to numerous movies and television shows, including the stagecoach used in Quentin Tarantino's *The Hateful Eight* and work on wagons for *Dances With Wolves* (which was nominated for 12 Academy Awards, winning

seven). His team also builds and restores wagons for museums and corporate businesses as well as for people who just want to own a wagon.

OCTA is working in partnership with the Mitchell Chamber of Commerce, Logan Luxury Theaters in Mitchell, and the Carnegie Center/Mitchell Area Historical Society to promote the red-carpet premiere of the movie on Wednesday, March 30 at 2 PM. The event will be filmed so everyone can enjoy it later. We're even inviting the governor of South Dakota (and hoping she can attend), so this will truly be a gala event. We are also in the final stages of finalizing

an agreement with South Dakota Public Broadcasting to air the program over the next three years.

So, what's next? OCTA is in the beginning stages of a massive fundraising campaign, so increasing our name recognition is a high priority for us right now. We believe that



these projects help get our name and brand in front of more people than ever. The plan is to continue creating high-quality content to augment our fundraising and recruiting activities and poise OCTA to remain competitive in the world of historic preservation.

And thank you to our members who helped sustain us these past two years. You're the real heroes in this story. Your donations got us through this rough stretch and allowed us to try all these new avenues. So thank you!

To view the videos, visit these links:

History and Change on the Old Spanish Trail
https://vimeo.com/614009867?fbclid=IwAR1r12_jkYDxjWtCp-6YFuBLIF8Uh2UcKGph_EbumhNZ24E7HaJus3huOk

Wilson's Creek: History Along the Wire Road
<https://vimeo.com/662101191>

Wagon Master: Hansen's Hand-Crafted History
https://vimeo.com/670298718?fbclid=IwAR3eY-hSL16UXnPz5eU2jfYy4D3mjywd8Nuhqecl5U7EZEn-3KvSd_U9_IUAK

Travis Boley

Publication News



Spring Ahead!

We will soon be entering the Spring season. It is usually one in which people take stock of their winter and past activities, take any corrective measures and plan for the successful completion of their goals for the summer and those

in the months ahead. It is the same for our committee. Two of the normal tasks are the preparations for the budget for next year and the selection of the recipient of the Merrill Mattes Award for the outstanding article in the Overland Journey. A review of this past quarter's treasurer's report for committee expenditures shows that our editors are right on target and are keeping within their budget. This will make the preparation of next year's budget easier.

It will be completed by June for recommendation to the Budget Committee. Members of the selection committee will be reviewing all the articles in last year's Overland Journal. It has always been a difficult task, and it appears that it will be so again. This process should also be completed by June. We will continue to introduce a few more of our new members in "Meet Our Members" in the next edition and hope that you enjoy meeting them.

The process of selecting the student artwork for the 2023 "Mountain Men, Indians, & Emigrants Trade & Trade Goods" calendar will commence towards the end of April. The deadline for submissions is "Tax Day-April 18" The goal is to have the process completed and the students contacted by the end of this school year. The calendar will be completed and available at the convention later this year. The theme for the following year has not yet been made. Your ideas are requested. *Bill Hill*

Welcome New Members

Worth Shipley Anderson
Vienna, VA

Jeffrey F Anderson
Pocatello, ID

Mike Bilbo
Fort Stanton, NM

Joyce Chancellor
State of Arizona
Mesa, AZ

Elder D Todd Christofferson
Church of Jesus Christ
of LDS
Salt Lake City, UT

Steve Dayton
Jerome, ID

Brian Gomen
Overland Park, KS

Craig and Kristin Henry
Hillsboro, OR

Benjamin Hollars
Eau Claire, WI

Joyce Jefferson
Rapid City, SD

Jayne Jergentz
Salem, OR

Mary Ann Kirk
Murray, UT

Erika Mailman
El Dorado Hills, CA

James McDaniel
Weston, MA

Richard Moynihan
Ballwin, MO

Michael O'Donnell
Escondido, CA

Jessica Pieczonka
Porter Ranch, CA

Margaret Randolph
Cottonwood, CA

Frank Richey
Salem, OR

Ross Rogers
Udall, KS

Jeff Stephens
Bend, OR

William Sullivan
Sacramento, CA

Vicci Turner
The Villages, FL

Rick Weathermon
Laramie, WY

Robert Woodard
Battle Ground, WA

Ed Wuelfing
Boise, ID

PRESERVATION



*By John Winner
National Preservation Officer*

OCTA's Mission is to protect the historic emigrant trails legacy by promoting public awareness of trails through research, education and preservation activities; by achieving organizational sustainability;

and partnering with others. Goal 1, Preserve the historic emigrant trails.

As I stated in the last issue of News from the Plains, from OCTA's very beginning saving the emigrant trails has been a top priority. Especially saving pristine segments where visual history can still be seen and shared. Probably one of the more difficult preservation threats to work through today is energy development. The need for more energy, more electricity for the ever increasing technology development and population growth. Green energy seems to be the primary goal of energy development. Wind and Solar, thousands of acres of land are now devoted to wind and solar farms followed by thousands of miles of transmission lines to transport the electricity to where power is needed. **But wait**, now another issue in trail preservation to deal with. wind turbine graveyards. Massive landfills to dispose of the worn out fiberglass blades. Fiberglass blades that do not deteriorate. In Wyoming, blades that have reached the end of their 25-year working lives will be cut into pieces and buried in a wind turbine graveyard near the trail in Casper, Wyoming.

In Nebraska, discussion centers on the R-Project, a 225-mile, 345 kV transmission line proposed Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD) that crosses the Oregon-California and Mormon National Historic Trails. When U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) issued an Incidental Take Permit (ITP), OCTA, Western Nebraska Resources Council and two private ranches sued. In addition to the cultural resources, concern was the threat to wildlife.

On June 17th, 2020, U.S. District Court Judge William Martinez vacated the ITP issued to NPPD and remanded the matter back to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In part, the Judge concluded that FWS did not mention potential wind turbine development in its analysis, which affected all its other analyses of endangered species. Nor were the effects of the R-Project transmission lines on the Oregon-California Trail and Mormon National Historic Trails considered.

A recent article appeared in Range Magazine, titled "Ill Wind in Cherry County, Power and Politics in the Nebraska Sandhills. The article focused on wind turbines and potential impact to wildlife including trumpeter swans and whooping cranes. Also, the afterlife of turbine blades. The blades can be 120 feet long. Here is a quote:

"Currently, wind-turbine blades that have reached the end of their useful life are cut into three pieces on site and hauled to a nearby municipal landfill or privately owned storage site. Blades are made of fiberglass and "carbon fiber" which is comprised of thin sheets of balsa wood harvested from tropical rainforests. The components are welded together with resin. Up to 8,000 blades will need to be disposed of a year in the U.S. alone"

So... besides the direct and indirect effects to emigrant trails, disposal of turbine blades now become a factor. More to come on this issue for sure

Here are a few preservation projects that we are working on:

R-Project: As mentioned above, the Incidental Take Permit to Nebraska Public Power District was vacated and remanded to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Recently we were informed that discussions have resumed between FWS and NPPD. On January 5th, 2022 a request was filed with FWS by the plaintiffs attorney, Eubanks & Associates, through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) for all records deemed germane. The request was made on behalf of OCTA, the lead plaintiff, a non-profit organization.

To date, several hundred pages of information have been received and are being reviewed.

Greenlink West Transmission Project: A 470 mile new electric transmission line and associated facilities from Las Vegas, Nevada to Reno, Nevada. The project includes 525-kV, 345-kV, 230-kV, and 120-kV transmission facilities plus a series of substations. Most of the transmission line runs parallel to Nevada Hwy. 95 until it reaches an area north of Yerington, Nevada where the line branches to Alt. 95. with multiple smaller transmission lines. The lines will terminate at the Mira Loma Substation, southeast of Reno and Comstock Meadow Substation, on Hwy 439, the new parkway connecting I-80 and Hwy. 50.

A new Fort Church Substation will be built. Three new 345kV transmission lines from Fort Churchill Substation: Line 1, 36 miles to Comstock Meadows Substation; Line 2, 33 miles to Comstock Meadows

Substation and Line 3, 44 miles to Mira Loma Substation.

The Area of Potential Effect (APE) will include crossing the Pony Express NHT, the Walker River-Sonora NHT and the California NHT, Carson Route, both the Desert and River branches. The proposed Direct APE Includes two segments of the California Trail and one segment of the Pony Express Trail, and the Indirect (visual) APE contains one segment of the Pony Express and three segments of the California NHT and segments of the Walker River-Sonora NHT.

OCTA is a consulting party to this project. A 90 minute “zoom” public input workshops were held on November 17, 2021 and February 23, 2022.

Greenlink North Transmission Project: This project spans approximately 235 mile from Ely, Nevada to Yerington, Nevada. This route will parallel U.S. Highway 50 which could impact the Central Overland Trail and the Pony Express NHT. The BLM will be preparing an Environmental Impact Statement for the right-of-way application submitted by Nevada Energy.

Southwest Intertie Project-North (SWIP-North): A 275-mile 500 kV transmission line in Idaho and Nevada. The line would run from the Midpoint substation, north of Twin Falls, Id. to Robinson Summit substation west of Ely, Nevada. This is the third phase of the SWIP project that continues on to southern Nevada. The SWIP (North) project will cross the the Oregon Trail, the Central Overland Trail, The Pony Express route, The Hastings Cutoff and the California Trail.

OCTA has been granted “Consulting Party” status as the process moves through its various stages. Idaho chapter Preservation Officers, Don Wind and Dave Price along with Kevin Lee from California-Nevada Chapter are monitoring this project.

There is a unique feature of the SWIP(North) project. Segments of the transmission line alignment are exempt from analysis and consultation by BLM, including where the line would cross California Trail north of Wells, NV and the Minidoka NHS northeast of Twin Falls, ID. In 2010 Congress passed H.R. 4899, the legislation enacted reroutes. The phrase “Notwithstanding any other provision of law..” was interpreted by a BLM solicitor to mean these segments are not subject to National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), National Trails Systems Act (NTSA), etc. thus exempt from analysis and consultation by BLM. Although BLM is precluded from analysis and consultation, I don’t believe this precludes OCTA from analysis and consultation with the project proponent.

Gravelly Ford Conservation Easement: The

proposed conservation easement resulting from mitigation on the Long Canyon open pit mine project is still in progress. The proposed easement would protect the California Trail south of Interstate 80 to the Gravelly Ford site. Property owner, Nevada Gold Mine has agreed to enter into the easement with Nevada Land Trust. We are now waiting for Nevada Land Trust to complete a draft agreement.

In the mean time, another element of the original mitigation agreement would have Nevada Gold Mine work with OCTA and others to create a virtual tour video focusing on the conservation easement and showcasing the pristine emigrant trail swales and the Gravelly Ford site. Preliminary discussions are underway. One aspect if the tour would give the viewer an opportunity to see modern day transportation, Interstate 80, with cars and 18 wheelers, then looking in the opposite direction and affording an opportunity for the viewer to vicariously share the view and experience of the original user of the historic route.

B2H: Efforts continue to alter the indirect (visual) effects of this this 300 mile Idaho Power Company 500 kV transmission line crossing the Oregon National Historic Trail in several loctions. Currently the focus is on the visual effects to the National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center at Baker City, OR. OCTA member Gail Carbiener continues his leadership role in this challenge. OCTA’s Western Region Represenative Isobel Lingenfelter prepared and submitted a drone project simulating the effects of the transmission towers and power lines. The matter went before an Administrative Law Judge where parties presented there cases including the cross examination of the witnesses. On February 28th, Gail Carbiener submitted a written brief to the Administrative Law Judge with both rebuttal and comments emphasizing the accuracy of the testimonies at the hearing. By June 1st, the ALJ is scheduled to decide whether the matter will proceed to the Oregon Governor’s appointed 7 member Energy Facility Sitting Council.

Epilogue: This is just a snapshot of a few preservation issues. There are many other trail issues being monitored along the emigrant trails. Lava Ridge Wind Farm in Idaho; Fernley Swales in Nevada; Gateway South Transmission Line in Wyoming, Colorado and Utah; Energy Projects in Kansas; I-229 road project in Missouri, to name a few. While it may be impossible to preserve and protect all known trails, we still need to be proactive. Your keen awareness is greatly appreciated. *More to come...*

The Fire at Robidoux Pass, Nebraska

By Bill Hill

While Mitchell Pass and the trail through Scotts Bluff is most known today, the old route west through the Gering valley up to Robidoux Pass was actually the route used by the early fur trappers, traders, military, and the emigrants and argonauts going west to Oregon and California during the 1840s and very early 1850s. What became known as Mitchell Pass through Scotts Bluff was first opened in 1851. Within a couple of years, it became the main route. It was believed to be shorter than the old route south of Scotts Bluff, but, in reality, it was about the same length. However, it was near the water of the North Platte River. This past September Robidoux Pass was in the news again.

Last year's fires were a major news story in much of the press. We've all heard about the massive fires that burned hundreds of thousands of acres in the West. In keeping with the times, I thought we should all know about the recent fire in Robidoux Pass. Compared to those in California and elsewhere, it was very small and not nearly as destructive. While at the final dinner of

the Elko Convention, I received a call from a resident/friend from Gering/Scottsbluff, Nebraska. He called to let Jan & me know that he was concerned about our place in Carter Canyon. He reported that a range fire by Robidoux Pass was burning on the east and west sides of the pass, and that both Carter Canyon Road and Robidoux Pass Road west from highway 71, as well as Rifle Site Road from the north, were closed to all traffic except for the emergency vehicles. We quickly tuned in the local news for Gering on our I-phones. It showed the fire in the distance on the horizon. It reported that the fire was not yet under control and was being fought by about five or six different local fire companies. While no ranch buildings or homes had been burned, there was concern it could, especially if the fire continued to move east down the valley or moved higher up into the wooded hills, ravines, and to the neighboring canyon. Our Carter Canyon neighbors told us the fire was over the other side of Carter Canyon and still a few miles away. Fortunately, later that night the companies and



View north from Robidoux's first post sign, looking over Robidoux Road where the trail approaches the ravine, north to the easternmost point of burn area across the valley.



Looking west from the eastern most point of the burn area on the south side of the valley showing the burned swale and the graded fire break next to the road.



Looking east back down the valley just off the road with the firebreak and the swales to the left.



Looking west at the pass and the fire damage at the Robidoux Pass display.



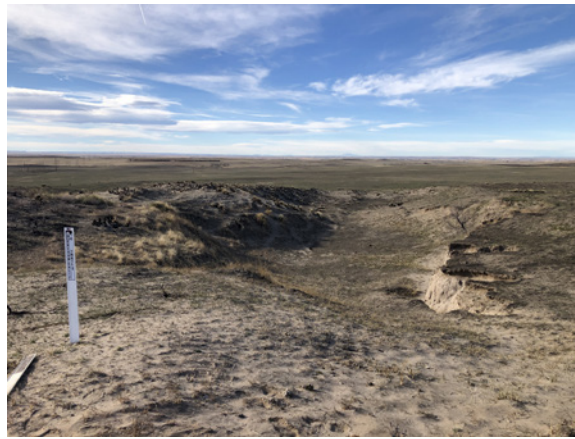
Randy repairing the fence at the display two months after the fire.



Looking west approaching the pass at one of the damaged markers and trail swales

other volunteers, helped by a reported change in the wind, were able to get the fire under control and put it out with no loss of structures. We started our return trip to Gering the next morning and arrived the following day to check out and photograph the area and the damage. Fortunately, both the site of Robidoux's first trading post and that of his second post farther away in Carter Canyon had escaped the fire. The area surrounding the marked graves in the valley floor was also not burned.

A limited amount of damage was done to the trail in places where the equipment had to cross the swales and a fire break was made on the north side of the road mostly next to it and parallel to the trail swales as they approached to the top of the pass. It appears that this was graded to keep the fire from jumping to the south of the road. Some of the OCTA trail markers both east and west and in the pass and part of the fence at the interpretive display at the pass were also burned and



West of the pass with a new and old marker by the wind-blown swales.



The finished product.

needed replacing. Only near the top of the pass where the road makes a hairpin turn was the fire able to jump the road and burn a comparatively small area. The fire did burn through the trail area for another mile or more west of the pass. It reportedly burned about 5 or 6 square miles which included about two miles of the trail.

By the following week, the physical damage to Robidoux Road from the equipment and usage was repaired. The road again was open to the public and the fire area began to recover. Later Randy Brown came down to assess the damage to the trail markers and fence in order to know what replacements would be needed. When the materials arrived in November, we replaced the badly burned markers and display fence rails. At the Elko Convention two old trail

markers from near Porter's Rock were sold. This year at Casper two of the markers from the Robidoux Pass will be available for purchase.

Getting Around To It

I always saw the train from the west to the east, having grown up in Oregon near the Columbia River. We learned the story of the Barlow Trail and the trip around Mount Hood with the final destination in the fertile valley of the Willamette River near Oregon City.

Fort Vancouver and the Hudson Trading Company were lessons we learned in school, and the stories of Astoria, and John Jacob Astor were part of our history that made the Beaver State more real to us. We were the Beaver State, and not just for Oregon State Beavers!

Those early lessons made me want to travel the whole Oregon Trail and see what made those pioneers think they could make the trip from across America by wagon or on foot. The fact that so many were able to complete that trip, including my own ancestors makes me humbler today. The more history I learn firsthand, the more I appreciate the value of their efforts. It makes me want to pass it forward. I want to

help others learn of the hardships and determination that made those pioneers special. They may have only left me their names and stories, and not their money, because money wasn't something they had to leave.

It's our job to pass it forward. We have the resources and the means to share those stories, and the perspective of the early American history. It's not always the stories we learned in school, but a good education should be well rounded. Experiences are valuable, and OCTA brings opportunity for learning from people who are passionate about history. Planned giving during our lifetime gives us the opportunity to see how well our gifts are received and appreciated. When we include OCTA in our estate plan with a stated gift, we give others the chance to carry the stories forward and keep history alive for the next generation. It's a discussion worth having if and when you get around to it. *Melissa Shaw, CFP*

Five Candidates Announce for three positions on the OCTA National Board of Directors

Five candidates have announced candidacies to serve on the OCTA National Board of Directors. They are Jean Coupal-Smith of Roeland Park, Kansas, and Steve Knight of Carson City, Nevada who are seeking a second three-year term.

Additionally, Michael J. Smith of Overland Park, Kansas, Matt Mallinson of Sugar Creek, Missouri and Cecilia Bell of Silver City, New Mexico are seeking a three-year term.

OCTA members are asked to fill out the ballot found on page 12 and return it to OCTA Headquarters at P.O. Box 1019, Independence, MO 60451 no later than June 15 or vote online at the link shown below the mail-in ballot. If a majority of members do not return ballots, candidates will be elected by a voice vote at the Annual Membership Meeting in Casper, Wyoming. Below are the candidate's statement of qualifications and experience. Members should use this "clip and return" ballot for your convenience. Elected Directors will take their positions in September 2022 for a three-year term.



Michael Smith has been an active member of OCTA since 2006 during which time he have attended several of the annual conferences including St. Joseph, Loveland, Oregon City and Council Bluffs.

In 2016 I retired from the position of Director/CEO of the Nebraska State Historical Society (now History Nebraska) after ten years of service. That concluded my 44 years of professional employment in the fields of historical administration and museums in Tennessee, Michigan, Iowa, New York, Massachusetts, and Nebraska. During my career I was active in several national, regional and state professional organizations. I was honored to serve as President of the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) between 1988 and 1990 and later, as President of the Mountain-Plains Museums Association. Outside of professional life I served terms as President of the Rotary Clubs of Davenport, Iowa, and Lowell, Massachusetts. In taking on any voluntary role, I have and will commit myself to effective collaboration and acceptance of responsibility. *His candidacy is endorsed by Pat Traffas, Steve Allison, and Bob Clark.*

Dear all,

It is with pleasure that I endorse Mike Smith's nomination to serve on OCTA's Board of Directors. I've known and worked with Mike for many years during his service with the Nebraska State Historical Society. He is a consummate professional with a deep love of history and affection for the stories of the West. He is committed to serving our association, and his participation in leadership will benefit us all. *Bob Clark*

Gentlemen,

I endorse Michael Smith as a candidate for election to OCTA Board of Directors. *Pat Traffas*



Jean Coupal-Smith has been a member of OCTA since 2012 and is a familiar sight at OCTA conventions. After a 17-year career with Johnson County Department of Motor Vehicles, she has worked part-time for Hobby Lobby for the past 16 years. She served three years as President of the Trails

Head Chapter and currently serves as chapter vice president. She is also treasurer of the Kansas City Area Historic Trails Association, as well as volunteering at OCTA headquarters and during conventions and symposiums. In addition, she has been an active member of the Kansas Society of Daughters of the American Revolution. Since 2012, she has been involved with every Convention and Mid-Year Board Meeting, assisting with the registration process and lending a helping hand where needed, including helping with bookroom sales and operations. In 2017 she was awarded the Elaine McNabney Distinguished Volunteer Award. *Her candidacy is endorsed by Bill Martin, Dick Waugh and Lee Black.*



Steve Knight has lived in Nevada since the mid-1970s, earning a degree in geology from the Mackey School of Mines and a Master's in Education from the University of Nevada. He has been a high school teacher, charter school superintendent and geologic engineer and hydrologist for the Nevada State Engineers office. He has been active in the California-Nevada

Chapter, serving on the Board, as Vice President and as President in 2005 to 2008. He and his wife, Patty, have organized five chapter symposiums and participated in the Fernley Sand Swales preservation efforts. He has received numerous chapter awards, including the Lifetime Achievement Award, and has been an active trail marker and mapper. As a Board member, he wants to emphasize research, education and preservation, especially encouraging educators and young adults to get out on the trails. He seeks to encourage additional OCTA presence on websites frequented by younger audiences. He also wants to support the researchers and preservation partners to help preserve the trails for future generations. *His candidacy is endorsed by Tom Fee, Dick Waugh and John Winner.*



Matt Mallinson Matt received his pharmaceutical degree from the University of Missouri - Kansas City in 1983. He owned and operated his own Medicine Shoppe pharmacy from 1987 to 2014 and still serves as a pharmacist in Richmond, Missouri. He received the "Community Service Award" from Medicine

Shoppe Inc International while also serving as President of the Missouri/Kansas Regional Association of Medicine Shoppes Inc from 1988 – 2007. During that time, he also served terms as an Alderman for the City of Sugar Creek, Mayor of the City of Sugar Creek, and continues to serve in his 11th year as a Board member of the Independence, Missouri School District. Matt joined Past to Present Research in 2015 to become the company's new co-owner. Matt previously served on the Board of Directors and continues to Co-Chair of Education Outreach for the Oregon California Trails Association. In 2007 Matt opened Mallinson Manor a wedding and event hall and winery in Sugar Creek. He and his wife Kathy have 6 grown children and two grandchildren. *His candidacy is endorsed by Audrey Elder, Gina Sifers and John Krizek.*

I am honored to recommend Matt Mallinson for OCTA's board of directors. Matt is, has been and will continue to be fully dedicated to the preservation and education of trail history. *Audrey L. Elder*

I highly recommend Matt Mallinson for the Board of Directors. *Gina Sifers*

I understand Mat Mallinson wants to rejoin the OCTA board. Huzzah! I can't imagine anybody more

qualified for that role, or who I could more heartily endorse. His combination of business acumen, involvement in our historical cause, and experience in the public arena, is exactly what our organization needs in this time of growth, opportunity, and challenges. *John Krizek*



Cecilia Bell was raised near the Horse Creek Rendezvous in the panhandle of Nebraska. As a child, a summer Park Ranger who was employed at Scottsbluff National Monument "hooked" me on the history and lore of the Oregon Trail. Always on trips back to Nebraska I had to get the feel of the trail dust on my feet. Once while returning to

Nebraska, I discovered an advertisement for Oregon California Trail Association activities in Gering. This advertisement linked me to the Southern Trail Chapter and a Symposium in Yuma and later Conference in Rock Springs, Wyoming.

I have been involved in OCTA and the Southern Trails Chapter in many positions: chapter board member, vice president and membership chairperson, and served as an OCTA Board Member for two terms. However, it is the friendships I have made across the trails that is most important.

In Silver City, New Mexico in 1998, I became a founding member of the Fort Bayard Historic Preservation Society. My love of teaching and experiencing history with students at Western New Mexico University showed me how important the preservation of the southern trails was. The landmarks, forts, and stories of all emigrants, Native Americans, stage drivers, and soldiers along the Southern Trails must be preserved. I endeavor to work towards this goal as your OCTA Board Member. *Her candidacy is endorsed by Sue Loucks, Shannon Perry and Mark Howe.*

I endorse Cecilia Bell for OCTA BOD due to her commitment and expertise on the trails and preservation work. *Mark Howe*

I highly recommend Cecilia Bell for a position on the Board of Directors of OCTA. I have known Cecilia as an active, articulate, passionate, and interesting member of the Southern Trails Chapter of OCTA. Her support of, and love of, Fort Bayard is an inspiration to all of us. Cecilia is a true trails person, dedicated to preservation and to spreading the word about our history. She is

knowledgeable, personable, and willing to speak up for her beliefs.

Cecilia has been and will continue to be an asset to OCTA. I highly recommend her for a position on the Board of Directors of OCTA. *Shannon Perry*

I highly recommend Cecilia Bell for a position on the Oregon-California Trail Association Board of Directors. She has been a longtime supporter of the Association. On the chapter level she has worked hard to help the Southern Trails chapter, but has also been a supporter of activities from other chapters. She has been a longtime supporter of Western history with her work at Fort

Bayard and preserving a Santa Fe Trail marker. She has worked with the Mormon Battalion as they celebrated their anniversary. She helped facilitate a conference in New Mexico commemorating the Mormon Battalion using the Southern Trail on their way to San Diego. An award from the Daughters of the American Revolution recently acknowledged the depth of her work in historic preservation, in a myriad of ways.

She has worked hard to increase membership in the OR-CA Trail Association and has also worked to bring together other organizations with common goals. *Susan Loucks*

2022 Official Ballot for the Election of Directors to the National Board of the Oregon-California Trails Association

All current members are eligible to vote. Membership levels with two members listed have two votes. Contact Headquarters at 816-252-2276 for questions regarding voting.

Vote for no more than THREE Directors for three-year terms (2022-2025)

	Member 1 Vote	Member 2 Vote
Michael Smith	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jean Coupal-Smith	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Steve Knight	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Matt Mallinson	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cecilia Bell	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write-In Candidate		

(Please cast ballot before **June 15, 2022** by mailing to Oregon-California Trails Association, PO Box 1019, Independence, MO 64050)

Online Voting

Voting this year can also be completed online and will take only a few minutes of your time.

Voting must be completed by June 15, 2022. **Please click the link below to vote:**

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSffx1WLLuyLKcW2yw0-yCII1kZdJXUi-vW2U5_5YdzVVb5w2A/viewform?usp=sf_link

Thank you for your vote, OCTA Nominating Committee



The Trail Beneath

By Bill Hill • Photos by Randy Brown and Bill Hill

Locating, identifying, and preserving the trails are major parts of OCTA's mission. Trails can be lost or destroyed in a short time. Agricultural land use, urbanization, natural disasters, weathering and

the steady passage of time as rocks deteriorate or disintegrate are some of the causes. Some trails can become partially or completely hidden by the growth of vegetation or covered by windblown soil and fallen



About thirty years ago Randy brought some OCTA members to see some of the trail. Note the two very different looking wheel tracks. One worn into the rock & the other is like a green path. View is looking back "east."



This most recent view east of the now swept clean ruts. Note again the trail marker.



Art, Jason, and Randy at work clearing the sand, deteriorated rock particles, and debris washed and blown in over the years.



View is looking "west." Cleaning nearly complete, showing deeper cuts into the rock.



Here is a recent photo of the same area. Note the trail marker in both.



Looking back up at Jason near the top where a tree grew up in the trail and where we began to clean.



After much clearing and moving of the larger fallen rocks, the cut became more evident.



Bill standing in one rut after more cleaning. It was much deeper than we first thought.



Randy clearing out the dirt. Note the light brown color showing the depth of the dirt removed.

rocks. Swales range from single gentle depressions to deeper water or windblown depressions; some two-tracks still have separate gentle wheel depressions; and ruts have two deep distinct cuts made from the passage of hundreds of wagon wheels over a surface. Ruts are probably the rarest of all, and perhaps the most thrilling to experience. The quality and depth of the ruts is dependent not only on the weight of a wagon's load, but also the amount and duration of wagon traffic. However, the physical characteristics of the surface where the wagon trail passed are extremely important. Ruts are not found in sandy soil or on the prairie, but in sandstone or harder rock. Perhaps the most well-known and best example are the ruts in a park in Guernsey, Wyoming.

Over the years Randy Brown has explored, marked, cleaned and mapped miles of the trails. In doing so, he



A little farther west looking east the trail's route can be seen in the trees and large rocks that now block the trail.

has met and come to know many of the owners as friends. Over time ownership of some of the ranches have changed hands, and some of the "new" owners are not always aware of the location or extent of the trails on their property. Those relationships have provided dividends for the ranchers with a greater knowledge of what they have and, also, to OCTA.

From late spring into this fall a few OCTA members have been clearing debris that has blown and washed in, along with the continued growth of brush and trees, that had hidden parts of the trails on a private ranch west of Guernsey. What one sees on the surface is sometimes misleading. Here are some photos of two portions of the trails that turned

out to be a pleasant surprise for the primary volunteers, Art Siverling, Bill Hill, and Jason Vican working with Randy Brown to clean them up.

1841 – California here we came!

By Pat Fletcher, Southern Trails Advocate

Bidwell and Bartleson come springing into our minds. But wait!

Another 1841 party made the journey- on the Southern Trails!

The who, what, when and where were discovered while searching records for natural history recorders of the 1840s. Left Independence May 8 "...for the botanical plants...." wrote William Gambel [Gambel's Oak, Gambel's Quail] with a Santa Fe bound merchant caravan to collect specimens for his friend Thomas Nuttall, premier naturalist of the time.

In the OCTA COED [now Paper Trail] Diaries of Toomes 41Too01 and Thomes 41Tho01 the date of company departure is 5/6; Josiah Belden 41bel01[R] lists gathering date as 5/1; Independence on 5/10, Belden was with Bidwell-Bartleson the entire way to California.

The 18-year-old Gambel collected plants in Santa Fe while there and left for California on southern routes traveling with William Workman-John Rowland wagon party.

Rowland got to Santa Fe after meeting fur traders in Boston and according to records worked for the American Fur Company in Taos. Workman "gravitated" to Taos and ran a general store and grist mill.

Both Workman and Rowland had married and lived in Santa Fe before moving their families to California in 1841 arriving in La Puente Valley in November 1841.

From the Workman Family Collection at the Autry National Center in L.A.:

"They were among the first settlers to obtain a land grant from the Mexican government for properties being given away or sold at bargain prices as part of the secularization of Spanish missions. Their arrival in the valley was a watershed event, for they were the first white men to obtain title to the 48,790-acre Rancho La Puente and to develop it into a thriving agricultural enterprise".

People emigrated west BEFORE the late 1840s, the gold rush. In subsequent years, other New Mexican families traveled the "southern route" to a new life in California.

John Brown's Widow

By Ken Johnson

John Brown's body lies a-mouldering
in the grave,
But his soul's marching on!
Glory Glory Hallelujah

Lyrics of memorial song.

John Brown, abolitionist, is notorious for his role in raiding the federal armory in Harpers Ferry, Virginia (today West Virginia), as he thought that "only force and firearms could overthrow slavery in the Southern States." An intensely religious man, who had studied to be a minister felt that he was "doing the work of God" in abolishing slavery in the South.



This print from the Library of Congress portrays the last moments in the life of John Brown as he was leaving jail on the morning of his execution in Charles Town, Virginia. Under heavy guard, he paused to kiss a Black child exemplifying an act of what Frederick Douglas said was "a brave and glorious old man... History has no better

illustration of pure, disinterested benevolence."

A journalist of the time considered Brown "an American who gave his life that millions might be free," but others considered him a monomaniacal zealot, a paranoiac, and an out-and-out villainous madman.

Historians agree that Brown's raid at Harpers Ferry in October 1859, the media coverage of his trial, and his hanging on December 2, 1859, escalated tensions that led to the South's succession and the American Civil War.

John Brown's widow, Mary Ann Day Brown was reportedly "quiet, modest, godly, and usually poor," but she was devoted to her husband and to his cause.

Even though money and words of support came from blacks and whites alike in the cities of the North, the family of John Brown could not escape attention from Confederate sympathizers who made life difficult for the family following his execution.

After the Browns tired of the notoriety they experienced at their home, Mary Brown, their two young daughters, Annie and Sarah, and stepson Salmon Brown and his family (Salmon was John's son from a previous marriage) decided to move west to Iowa and then perhaps

emigrate to California where they could start life anew. After they spent an especially tough winter in Iowa in 1863, they joined a wagon train containing 40 wagons following the California Trail west.

Along the way, a group of Confederate sympathizers discovered their identity and started trouble allegedly poisoning a couple of their sheep and causing them to fear for their lives.



Newspapers, meanwhile, mis-reported the Brown family story. The New York Tribune of September 22, 1864, reported the story, "There is a painful

rumor, not yet confirmed... that they were pursued by Missouri guerrillas, captured, robbed, and murdered." However, the Browns had secretly pulled their wagons ahead and safely reached the Union post at Soda Springs, Idaho, — just three hours before their pursuers. Soldiers traveled with the Browns for the next 200 miles to Nevada, where they followed the Humboldt River to the Lassen Meadows cutoff.

Turning north, they then followed the Nobles Emigrant Trail through the Black Rock Desert to Susanville and on to Shasta City, as the Nobles Trail had by that time proven itself to be the easiest route into Northern California.

Later, while going south from Shasta to Red Bluff and crossing the Bell Toll Bridge over Clear Creek, the toll keeper asked them their names. Learning that they were the family of the abolitionist, John Brown, he refused to accept their toll, refunded their money, tended to their needs, and introduced them to others.

The townspeople of Red Bluff warmly received Mrs. Brown and her two daughters, giving them flour, groceries, shoes, cloth, and temporary employment.

Governor Low of California even headed a statewide committee to raise funds for the almost-penniless family. Through hosting dances, receptions, and calico parties, enough funds were raised to build a small house at 135 Main Street, and it still exists.

They lived there until 1866. Daughter Ellen taught school at Antelope School in Red Bluff, and daughter Annie taught Black students at an African American school near Proberta. Two of her pupils became the first Blacks to receive teaching credentials in California.

In 1866, a former Southerner living in Red Bluff

instigated more trouble for the Browns, and the family sold the house and moved Rohnersville, a small town in Humboldt County, where they found more peaceful surroundings.

When Mary died on February 29, 1884, she had asked to be buried beside her husband 2,000 miles away in New York, but the family considered that too expensive, and she

was buried in Madronia Cemetery in Saratoga, California.

One concern that must have occupied the minds of the Browns as they moved West and lived with their reputation, was what their neighbors and history would think of John Brown. Was he a martyr for the abolitionist movement, or a madman, as southern sympathizers claimed? The question is still controversial today.

Meet Our Members

In the previous edition you were introduced to new two members from the East coast. Moving from one side of the Lower 48 to the other side, you will now get a chance to be introduced to two of our recent new members from the west coast. We present one from each of the states of Washington and Oregon. We welcome them and our other recent additions not featured in this column to OCTA. So, let's get right to it.

From Washington we have Peter Wolf. Peter's interest goes back to his youth when he first became interested in history. While he was not born at what many people think of as the "end of the trail" the Oregon City, Portland, Vancouver area, he was born and raised in Lewis County, Washington an area that was the "end of the trail" for the many emigrants who spread out after reaching Oregon. Nearby was the old Borst Blockhouse. Not only did he want to learn more about how and why the people went west, but how they got to the different parts of Washington. He became interested in those other trails that spread out from Oregon City and has wanted to learn even more.

Peter learned about the Oregon-California Trails Association (OCTA) as a result of his earlier visits to the Oregon Trail Museum in Baker City, OR and his visits to the California Trail Center in Elko, NV. He decided that by joining OCTA, it would be able to help him further his knowledge. Over the years he and his family have visited several of the trail centers, museums, and trail markers along the trails. Now he hopes to learn even more about the trail extensions, how the emigrants obtained the land they settled on, and, especially, how they were able to survive through their first winter and year.

Peter is married with two children and two grandchildren. In his earlier years he had attended Washington State University and served in the Air Force for four years. He has lived on a small 15-acre farm for forty years near the Matilda Jackson house and park, another historically significant figure in the history of the earlier Oregon Trail period. For twenty-five years he ran a feed store, and for the last twenty years a "traditional" grass seed business. He is now looking forward to a wider association with the Northwest Chapter and expanding his knowledge of the settlement of the Oregon Territory,

especially Washington in the 1840s and 50s. He is sure to find chapter members who can help him.

From the neighboring state of Oregon one of our new members is Bridget Rogers from Beaverton. Bridget was a member of the Washington Trails Association (WTA) when she heard of OCTA. Even though the association was in the neighboring state, she had joined it because of her interest in helping to clean and maintain different types of trails. She was looking for a similar organization but in her own state. She had been "fascinated" by the Oregon Trail and had watched a number of movies and TV documentaries, and read books on it, but had never really had been to it or traveled over it. So, when she learned about the existence of the Oregon-California Trails Association, she decided to investigate it and then to join. I guess she liked what she heard.

While Bridget doesn't have a favorite trail, nor has she hiked on any of the trails yet, she would like to and hopes to go on a hike over part of them. (She sounds like a good candidate for the local chapter and their outings or the National Convention and the tours or pre & post-convention trail treks.) She would like to get a chance to see and walk along in the "ruts," and, perhaps, to see the remains of broken-down wagons, that is "history right there at your fingertips." She also expressed that someday she would like to explore parts of the California Trail and the site of the Donner disaster where they were forced to spend the winter.

She noted that she doesn't know all the things that OCTA is involved in or how she might help OCTA. I told her that OCTA should be able to help her fulfill her trail experience hopes. It was her interest in trail maintenance that brought her to OCTA and hopes she can lend a hand in that way. She also has skills and experience in graphic design and event planning and would be willing to lend a hand.

Bridget is married, works for an electrical construction company, and has three cats and enjoys helping. In short, Bridget is interested in the trails and is a volunteer at heart. It seems we have a "perfect fit."

Now that we've gone from one coast to the other and have been introduced to two more new members, for the next edition we'll have to head to the interior of our country for our "Meet Our Members."

Join us at the CA/NV OCTA Spring Symposium

We are looking forward to our spring symposium at the Gaia Hotel and Spa in Anderson, California just off I-5 on Riverside Road, just west of a Trails West, Inc. rail marker beside the river where a ferry crossed the Sacramento River and carried emigrants, packers, and freight wagons across on their way to the town of Shasta and the gold fields on Clear Creek in 1848.

The Nobles Trail will be a feature of the symposium starting with a presentation by Ken Johnston about the trail—a major route into Northern California in the 1850's. From the ferry, the trail followed down what is now Riverside Road, past the Gaia Hotel, and ended at Shasta.

The Shasta Historical Society, will do a presentation on Pierson B. Reading, a prominent Northern California pioneer. He received the northernmost Mexican Land grant, Rancho Buena Ventura, and made the second gold strike in California in 1848 on Clear Creek, west of his ranch.

Another highlight of the symposium will be a historical enactment by the Voices of the Golden Ghosts. (See their background information below.) Their mission is to bring to light the interesting and important pages of African American involvement in the Gold Rush, as their stories have been nearly lost from the history books to date.



On Sunday following the symposium, we will meet at Shasta State Historic Park for a tour and historic presentation by Jonathan Sutliff, park interpreter. We'll see what remains of the old city at the end of the Nobles Trail, tour the museum, visit the historic cemetery where Phoebe Colburn is buried, then do a tour back

up the Nobles Trail as far as Shingletown. We will cross the river where the ferry was located, then see where Fort Redding was situated. We'll pass by the Dersch Ranch, where Mrs. Dersch was massacred by Indians. We'll see the location of Foot of the Mountain Station that was owned by Phoebe Colburn, and we will visit Charlie's Ranch, where Bear and Bull fights brought people from as far away as Sacramento and San Francisco to witness the excitingly brutal action that was finally outlawed in 1859.

We'll end the tour at Shingletown, which was named for the shingles it produced for Shasta and neighboring gold rush towns.

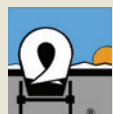
Voices of the Golden Ghosts

The history of California is replete with stories of the '49ers traveling the emigrant trails to the gold fields and their experiences, hardships, and bonanzas; however, an important and interesting part of that record has been nearly lost—the accounts of African Americans working as prospectors and miners. Fortunately, a group in northern California is researching the records and reviving the accounts of African Americans, both slaves and free men, working



in the gold mines, at the diggings, and panning the streams. Under the leadership of Mark Oliver and Patricia Lord, the group features a cast of local actors and speakers who do living history enactments portraying a dramatic interpretation of the role of black people in Shasta County.

A multigenerational cast of actors and presenters enthusiastically bring their production to Northern California in order to portray the life-stories of the area's multi-ethnic heritage.



CA-NV Chapter OCTA Meeting and Symposium – May 6, 7 & 8 The Nobles Trail and Voices of the Golden Ghosts



Friday, May 6 – The OCTA board meeting will be held from 9:00 a.m. to approximately 3:00 p.m. at the Mt. Lassen Room of the Gaia Hotel and Spa on Riverside Place in Anderson, California. From 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. a wine and cheese meet and greet will take place in the Mt. Shasta room – Open to all.

Saturday, May 7 – The symposium will take place in the Himalaya A room. The chapter membership meeting will begin at 9:00 a.m. and will last approximately one hour. Ken Johnston will follow with a PowerPoint presentation on the Nobles Emigrant Trail that passed by the location of the Gaia Hotel on its way from a ferry crossing on the Sacramento River to Shasta City. Jeremy Tuggle, Education and Community Engagement Manager from the Shasta Historical Society will give us a presentation on the legacy of Pierson B. Reading, a prominent pioneer who received a Mexican Land Grant and discovered gold on Clear Creek in 1848,

which led to a gold rush in the area. Lunch will be served buffet style followed with afternoon presentations and enactments by Voices of the Golden Ghosts, who will bring to life the history and influence of African-Americans participating in the 1849 Gold Rush. 4:00 p.m. will be a no host bar with entertainment. A buffet dinner will be served at 6:00 followed by chapter awards and an auction.

Sunday, May 8 – We will meet at the Shasta State Historical Park for a presentation and guided tour of the museum, the remains of the ghost town, and the historic cemetery, where we will see Phoebe Colburn's grave. Then we will car caravan back along the Nobles Emigrant Trail as far as Shingletown. We will see the sites of Fort Reading, the Dersch ranch and massacre site, visit Foot of the Mountain Station that was owned by Phoebe Colburn, and stop at Charlie's Ranch where Bull and Bear Fights drew crowds from as far away as Sacramento and San Francisco.

Special hotel rates of \$104.00 + tax are available at the Gaia Hotel and Spa. Mention OCTA when making your reservation. (530) 365-7077, 4125 Riverside Place, Anderson, CA, Just off I-5. This is a totally smoke free facility and some rooms are pet friendly—just ask. Other motels

and RV sites are available in the area.

Deadline for registration is April 20, 2022. For additional information or to make special needs arrangements please contact Ken or Jo Johnston at (541) 883-7671, (214) 803-2583 or kljstn@msn.com

\$85.00 per attendee x _____ number of attendee(s) = \$ _____ enclosed

Please make checks payable to **CA-NV OCTA** and send to:
CA-NV Chapter OCTA • Phyllis Smith • 1054 Maple Ave. • Yuba City, CA 95991-3324

Attendee Information

First Name _____ Last Name _____

First Name _____ Last Name _____

Address: _____

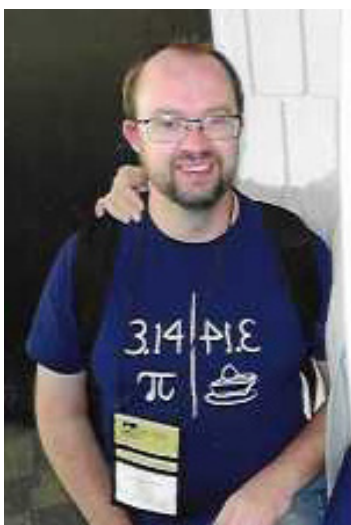
City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

News from the Chapters

CROSSROADS

Greetings from Crossroads! The big news is that, after Steve Allison's move to National, we have a new president. Matt Ivory has stepped in to fill this role. Matt is the grandson of the late George Ivory who was a legendary member of Crossroads and active leader from its early days. Matt was with us in Elko last fall and has resumed activity again after a small health setback. Membership meetings may start this spring.

More big news is from San Diego where the mid-year symposium was held on January 28. The main focus was the 175th anniversary of the arrival of the Mormon Battalion on January 29, 1847. There was a full day of activities and a local tribe Indian Chief addressed the group. It went well and was well attended.



In other news locally. In Tooele County the Lake Point Trails Park is progressing. However, a large development threatened the trail site, but it has been saved and the property has been given to the local Parks Office. Plans are underway for cleanup and the NPS Trail Office will be there March 29, 2022, to officiate. Good news there!

This spring a field trip will be planned, perhaps to Donner Springs, to see what conditions are like there. The ranch has ceased operation, and it has been a while since anyone has been there.

And Jesse Petersen and Victor Heath are working on a new "T" post for a site in Boxelder County, Utah, this spring.

Stay tuned for future updates. – A. Oscar Olson

WYOMING

Save the date!

National 2022 OCTA convention slated for Casper. The Oregon-California Trails Association and the Wyoming Chapter of OCTA will hold OCTA's 40th annual convention, "Leaving the Platte," in Casper, Wyoming, August 28 - September 2, 2022.

The conference will include two full days of talks and presentations, and two full days of bus tours to trail sites east and west of Casper on the Oregon/California/Mormon trails—and north of Casper on the Bozeman Trail.

We also plan a private-vehicle trek pre-conference from grave sites near Fort Laramie to Register Cliff and the Guernsey ruts, and a pair of post-conference, private-vehicle treks to South Pass—one up the Seminoe Cutoff and the other over Rocky Ridge.

Speakers will include keynoter and historian Todd Guenther on the history and meaning of South Pass; Camille Bradford on the huge Oregon Trail centennial gathering at Independence Rock in 1930 organized by her stepfather, Howard Driggs; Clint Gilchrist of the Mountain Man Museum in Pinedale, Wyoming, on the

fur trade and its connections to the historic trails; a panel on collaborations between the Bureau of Land Management and the LDS Church on management and interpretation of the trails along the Martin's Cove-South Pass corridor; sessions on the turbulent

history and current-day preservation of the Bozeman Trail, which ran north from the North Platte to the gold fields of Montana—and much more.

Activities will include demonstrations by famed South Dakota wheelwright and wagon maker Doug Hansen and a mochila exchange by Pony Express riders.

Other events will include a banquet, a barbecue, an auction, raffle, book room and an authors' night. Conference headquarters will be the Ramkota Inn in Casper.

Wyoming has some of the longest and best-preserved trails, swales and pioneer grave sites in the nation. See you in 2022!

Click here for much more information on Wyoming's trails. We will visit many of these sites during the conference. *Tom Rea*



NORTHWEST

Our chapter is struggling to fill some officer positions. The main vacancy is for Vice President, but we have vacancies for committee heads as well. We all hope that we can get back to in-person meetings so that we can work with our new members to build our chapter back to an active and useful group of trail enthusiasts.

Dave Welch has agreed to plan events for the next year. We will have a Zoom meeting each month which will include reports on Chapter actions and programs about the trails. Robin Baker is planning to lead 4 hikes along the Barlow Road: 2 in June and 2 in July. We will also participate in activities at Philip Foster

Farm, the Oregon Lavender Festival in Oregon and 3 events in Washington. The events are to be held in Steilacoom and Puyallup. We are also planning some Auto tours of the trails. We are pleased to have Dave working on these events.

We will be working in our Storage Unit this month to sort 30 boxes of donated books and materials left to us from past members. We will be gathering trail histories, diaries, general histories and remembrances. We hope to provide a place for research and protection for members' trail collections. We plan to work with the OCTA Collections Committee to preserve our information. *Sallie K. Riehl, President*

IDAHO

Winter in Idaho is slowly starting to fade away. About the time you think it is over, Mother Nature changes direction and sends another cold front through the state. Those of you wintering in warm areas such as Yuma can start thinking about heading home in the next month.

The Boise Schools Community Education classes on the Oregon Trail in Idaho which I will teach in March are sold out with 20 people in each of three classes. This affords an excellent opportunity to share the great trail resources of Idaho to many people who are interested in learning about the trails and are potential new members of OCTA and the Idaho chapter. The class participants are encouraged to join the annual byway tour to get them hooked on the enjoyment of the Oregon Trail.

The annual byway tour will be held on Saturday, April 23. This will be a caravan tour of selected portions of the Main Oregon Trail Back Country Byway. We will visit pristine ruts, graves, and possible massacre sites through the day. We will also hike to Inscription Rock on Ditto Creek to view emigrant names written on a granite pinnacle beside the Oregon Trail. The tour will be joined this year by the Mountain Home DAR group to share the opportunity to learn more about the Oregon Trail in their area.



I have been working with City of Rocks personnel to plan an outing at the reserve on May 12-14. We have worked with the COR for several years and always have a great time doing metal detecting on California Trail sites and searching for emigrant graves in

conjunction with the COR staff and archaeologist. We are working on a detecting activity on private property and another trip over Granite Pass which will follow the California Trail down the west side this time. I will also be planning the spring chapter meeting for Saturday, May 14, in Burley as part of this 3-day activity.

Additional activities being considered for this year include following the

Jeffreys-Goodale Route through INL, the Oregon Trail near Massacre Rocks, the Lander Road in eastern Idaho, and the Oregon Trail from Fort Boise to Farewell Bend in conjunction with the Northwest OCTA chapter. Please let me know if you would like to visit other areas of the Trails in Idaho.

If you have never participated in chapter activities, this spring would be a great time to get involved. Please come join us. Watch the chapter website calendar page (idahoocta.org/calendar) for upcoming chapter activities.

I hope to see you soon.

Jerry Eichhorst

TRAILS HEAD

Several years ago, NPS asked our chapter to make a plan for placement of trail signs on Douglas County, KS, roads. That is the county where the city of Lawrence is located. The KU campus there has a marker monument placed in 1954 to locate where the California/Oregon trail passed through the future campus. A preliminary signage plan from the eastern edge of the county, through Lawrence, and to the western edge of the county was begun. Due to the untimely death of **Allen Wiechert** who was then our Preservation Chair, the pandemic, and personnel changes at NPS, the project was dormant until **Pat Traffas** became the new Preservation Chair. Her peer review committee has met several times in-house and on the road with GLO maps,

survey notes, and new documentation. NPS is ready to assist with creating overlay maps of the county. Spring weather should give a boost to this project.

Lila Aamodt and **Dick and Ruby Nelson** experienced OCTA's Symposium held in conjunction with the Mormon Battalion's 175th Commemoration of their arrival in San Diego January 29, 1847, during the Mexican American War. Among other things, we learned about Company B's extended stay to protect San Diego during which they were very helpful to the locals. They dug wells and built a kiln to make bricks for sidewalks, for chimneys, and for an oven to bake bread and cook meat. *Lila Aamodt*

GATEWAY

Gateway Chapter has used the winter months of January, February and March as planning time. The board has met monthly under the leadership of President David Berger.

On the evening of April 21st. Gateway Chapter and the Black Archives Museum of St. Joseph will sponsor "Buffalo Soldiers," from the Missouri Humanities Council. The speakers, J.R. Bruce, George PeNgrew, and Donna Madison are members of the Alexander/Madison Chapter of KansasCity.

Gateway members will present and serve as speakers for a program for the public with a Riverwalk through History on June 4th. On the City's Riverwalk from the historic crossing area for thousands of emigrants to the mouth of Roy's Branch near the Remington Nature Center, participants will stop

at stations to learn about different aspects of our community's place in history.

In addition, Gateway members are invited to attend the monthly programs of the DoniphanCounty Historical Society.

A bus tour for the Truman Presidential Library and other historic sites is in the planning stages for September 17th. President Truman played a role in the recognition of the Santa Fe Trail.

On October 1st, Gateway will have a car caravan tour of parts of the St. Joe Road in Doniphan County and Brown County, Kansas. Swales on a feeder trail from Atchison will be viewed with the landowner providing a rustic, emigrant-style chuck wagon experience.

Additional plans for the year are being considered.
Jackie Lewin

CALIFORNIA-NEVADA

The California-Nevada Chapter is finally seeing some light at the end of the Corona virus lockdown. In September, with the organizational leadership of Helen Hankins, Duane Jones and the planning committee we held a very successful national convention in Elko some field fun trips on the emigrant trails, and we continue to be actively involved in OCTA's mission to protect the Historic Emigrant Trails legacy by promoting research, education, preservation activities, and public awareness of the trails, and to work with others to promote these causes. Our chapter remains strong with 399 members and financial security.

We held our spring board meeting on February 23, and our main topic was the Spring Symposium, which had to be postponed and put on hold until this May 6, 7, & 8. We are again looking forward to hosting it at the Gaia Hotel and Spa in Anderson, California. The hotel is located beside the Nobles Emigrant Trail and near to where people on the trail ferried across the Sacramento River to get to the Gold Rush opportunities in Shasta City. History of the Nobles Trail is to be a focus of our presentations and half-day post symposium field trip will present some of the interesting features and history of the trail. Plus, we will be featuring the Voices of the Golden Ghosts who

are reviving the history of African Americans, whose contributions to the mining enterprise in Northern California during the Gold Rush, have been lost (refer to the article on *The Voices of The Golden Ghosts* included in this issue and also see the registration information and forms).

Other activities and work parties are being planned for this year (with conditions permitting, of course).

- Spring Survey on the newly discovered cutoff of the California Trail from the Truckee Swales to the Truckee River. Date to be announced
- Chapter participation in Trail Days at Calif trail Interpretive Center. June 18 & 19
- Lassen Trail fun trip and camp out with a Burnett Trail side trip and see the routes a large number of 49ers entered Northern California during the Gold Rush. August 1-5
- Beckwourth Trail work days. Date to be announced

As things continue to open up this year, we wish that all will remain safe and healthy and that we can see members on our trail activities and again gather

around the campfire.

We will have The Voices of The Golden Ghosts do historical reenactments and historical presentations about the African American influence and contributions during the Gold Rush in Northern California. Much of the history of their involvement in the Gold Rush has been lost, and this group is doing an excellent job in reviving it. *Ken Johnston*



SOUTHERN TRAILS

Southern Trails Chapter BOD has been meeting each month to keep the chapter functioning and members informed of upcoming events in person or virtual.

Charlie Dodge will give a talk in August on our monthly Southern Trails Zoom lecture. She will be talking on Chinese history (trail and trade) to our western coast (California and Mexico). Our Third Thursday Talks for July 15th was by Father Greg Adolph on the Manila Galleon.

New Bylaws were approved last month in the STC board meeting and will be sent out to membership for approval. We also had a large donation to the Southern Trails Chapter of back issues of the Overland Journal by Carol and Vern Osborne and the Desert Tracks by Jere Krakow.

Our Third Thursday talk for our monthly Southern Trails Zoom discussion was presented by Gil Storm on "Traveling the Devil's Road".

Long-time member and active supporter, Tom Sutak died in September and Cecelia Bell would send condolences from herself and the chapter.

Trails West group would like to coordinate with our Spring Symposium so that both of our Spring meetings are not at the same time and potentially people can attend both.

Gina Sifers from Bella Media Systems talked about OCTA forming an Archaeology Committee, which would help to link archaeological information on the OCTA website. They will work with the U.S. Forest Service and others to link information and articles on archaeological information on western trails. Mary Conrad started the concept for a link between OCTA and Forest Service information. The information will be organized alphabetically by the states in the West.

Our Southern Trails Chapter Spring Symposium has will be in Temecula, California from April 25-27, 2022.

The Big Bend Conference (Alpine, Texas) is the first week of November and was suggested as a possible Southern Trails Symposium for the chapter members on the Eastern end of the trail. It is difficult for members at either end of the trail to attend Symposiums at the opposite ends of the trail. This is why this was proposed.

Isobel Lingenfelter is making a flyer with current and future talks to be sent out to OCTA membership via the websites and social media.

National OCTA President John Briggs was a director meeting guest and reported on the OCTA Board meeting. OCTA finances are continuing to stay in the black. Membership is on the uptick and the next OCTA Convention will be Aug 28- Sep 3, 2022, in

Casper, Wyoming. Pat Fletcher reported that the 2025 Convention is scheduled for 2025 at Fort Smith under the sponsorship of the Southern Trails chapter. John also reported that the talks at San Diego were recorded and will be up on the You Tube channel.

Bill Martin reported that SB 3519, the Butterfield Historic Trail Designation, bill has been introduced in the Senate.

Melissa Shaw reported that she along with her business and webmaster they are putting together information, road trip map, and registration for the Temecula Southern Trails chapter symposium.

There will be a road trip all day Tuesday and talks on Wednesday. Cecilia Bell talked briefly about the proposed Southern Trails chapter conference along with the Big Bend Conference in Alpine, Texas the second weekend in November. There is a possibility of Amtrak transportation available from Los Angeles to El Paso and then from El Paso to Big Bend and back.

Jan Iwashita and Doug Hocking are constantly updating information on our Facebook and Website. Doug's new book is at the publisher. It is about train robberies along the Southern Border. *Mark Howe*

COLORADO-CHEROKEE

Our Zoom events are continuing:

- March 12: How California Got Its Borders
Presentation by Frank Tortorich
- April 9: Starting an OCTA Field Team from Scratch: Lessons and Tools Used in the Northern

Colorado Cherokee Trail Project Presentation by
Ethan Gannett and David May

- May 14: The Great Western Sugar Company
Presentation by Sharon **Danhauer**

Camille Bradford

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For \$50 a year, OCTA Business Sponsors receive a listing on the OCTA website and in *News From the Plains*, 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:

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Thank You!

Thanks to the many donors who support OCTA's preservation work through gifts to our annual fund drive and memorial gifts to those who have passed. Recent gifts include:

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OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
SEPTEMBER 30, 2021 AND 2020

	2021	2020
Assets		
Cash and Cash Equivalents:		
National	\$ 115,631	\$ 60,761
Chapters	155,551	144,022
	<u>271,182</u>	<u>204,783</u>
Accounts Receivable	1,771	1,334
Prepaid Expense	350	-
Inventory (at cost)	23,642	26,171
Investments (Endowment Funds)	1,990,214	1,573,587
Property and Equipment - Net of Accumulated Depreciation	<u>1,185</u>	<u>1,185</u>
Total Assets	<u>\$ 2,288,344</u>	<u>\$ 1,807,060</u>
Liabilities		
Accounts Payable	\$ 29,864	\$ 16,009
Deferred Revenue	27,963	19,516
Total Liabilities	<u>57,827</u>	<u>35,525</u>
Net Assets		
National:		
Without Donor Restrictions	928,331	707,351
With Donor Restrictions	1,146,635	920,162
	<u>2,074,966</u>	<u>1,627,513</u>
Chapters	155,551	144,022
Total Net assets	<u>2,230,517</u>	<u>1,771,535</u>
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	<u>\$ 2,288,344</u>	<u>\$ 1,807,060</u>

OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION
STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
YEARS ENDED SEPTEMBER 30, 2021 AND 2020

	2021	2020
National Operating Revenues:		
National Park Service	\$ 155,993	\$ 126,468
Membership Dues	70,217	72,930
Life Memberships	A 6,750	5,250
Convention and Symposium	81,703	13,976
Contributions and Grants	104,719	109,941
Endowment Fund Contributions	A 5,600	585
Memorial Contributions	A 75	60
Book and Mdse. Sales, Net of Costs	8,606	3,375
Other	5,776	6,703
Less Income Designated for Endow	B (12,425)	(5,895)
Total National Operating Revenues	<u>427,014</u>	<u>333,393</u>
National Operating Expenses:		
Expenses Paid from Specific Contributions and Grants	25,508	15,044
Board Meetings and Officers Expenses	1,112	11,223
Administration and Management	243,587	214,662
Publications	45,648	44,429
Film Amortization	-	34,753
Convention and Symposium	68,775	10,590
Committees (Preservation, etc.) and Other Expenses	24,559	18,502
Total National Operating Expenses	<u>409,189</u>	<u>349,203</u>
Increase (Decrease) in Net Assets from Operations - National	<u>17,825</u>	<u>(15,810)</u>
Other Income and Expenses:		
Chapters Income	49,654	34,918
Chapters Expenses	38,125	18,267
Net	<u>11,529</u>	<u>16,651</u>
Investment changes - Endowment Funds	417,203	44,214
Income Designated for Endowment Funds	B 12,425	5,895
Total Other Income	<u>441,157</u>	<u>66,760</u>
Total Increase In Net Assets	<u>458,982</u>	<u>50,950</u>

A: These three items make up the amounts designated for endowment funds. \$12,425 in 2021 and \$5,895 in 2020

B: These are offsetting amounts

2021-2022 OCTA Board of Directors

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Important Dates and Deadlines

Award Nominations – June 1

Budget Development – Budget Request – May 23 (Per OCTA Procedural Manual)

News from the Plains material – Spring issue: February 25, Summer issue: May 25,
Fall issue: August 25, Winter issue: November 25

Nominating and Leadership – Announcement of election and number of vacancies on the
Board of Directors: November 25 News from the Plains Deadline; Bio and ballot: April 1

Outstanding Educator Award Application – March 31

Calendar Art for Western Calendar – April 15

National Park Service Volunteers-in-Parks (VIP) – October 1

Volunteer data (Hours, Expenses, Mileage) to Partnership – Report hours on the website
at <https://www.octa-journals.org/octa-volunteer>. They can be reported as they are
accumulated. If you track your hours on the paper form (available at <https://www.octa-trails.org/activity-forms/>), please report them to HQ by December 31.

Overland Journal – Spring issue to membership: approximately May 20,
Summer issue to membership: approximately August 20, Fall issue to membership:
approximately November 20, Winter issue to membership: approximately February 20

NEWS FROM THE PLAINS

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Spring 2022 Issue Deadline: May 25, 2021
Send materials to: jaylawrenceocta@gmail.com

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They don't have to disappear.

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Consider joining

OCTA's Trails Legacy Society

Your gift to an OCTA Endowment fund through a bequest or estate gift will help guarantee our ability to preserve and protect the trails.

Visit octa-trails.org/trails-legacy-society

You can make sure that ours are not the last footprints left on the trail.

A Reminder for Ezra Meeker Life Members

If you are an Ezra Meeker Life Member of OCTA and a member of one or more regional chapters, your chapter dues renew on January 1 each year.

For your convenience, you can renew your chapter memberships online by visiting octa-trails.org/why-join-octa/ and following the appropriate links for regional chapters.

You can also call headquarters at (816) 252-2276 for more information.

If you are not an Ezra Meeker Life Member, you can join at that level at any time.

The cost is \$1,000, which can be spread over several regular payments.

Remember, funds from Meeker Life memberships go directly to OCTA Endowments, helping create a legacy of support for trails preservation and education.

Call headquarters to learn more.



OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 1019
Independence MO 64051

In this issue:

The Fire at Robidoux Pass, Nebraska

Meet Our Members

CA/NV Spring Symposium Registration

News from the Chapters



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
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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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