



Northwest Trails

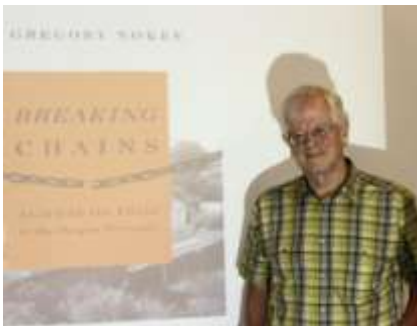
Newsletter of the Northwest Chapter of the Oregon-California Trails Association

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Fall 2014

NW OCTA Annual Fall Picnic October 4, 2014 Vancouver, Washington

Twenty-three people attended the Annual Fall Picnic at the Clark County Genealogical Society Annex in Vancouver on Saturday, October 4. The business meeting began at 10:00 and lasted until the break for lunch. Items covered included funding for signage, treasurer's report on the proposed 2014–15 chapter budget, the chapter website, and a discussion of declining national membership and its impact on OCTA's financial situation. After lunch R. Gregory Nokes presented a fascinating program on his book *Breaking Chains: Slavery on Trial in the Oregon Territory* (2013). The meeting concluded with the ever-popular raffle.



Gregory Nokes



Lethene Parks



Maura Egan and Rich Herman



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President's Message

A few weeks ago I was contacted by an archaeologist contracting with NCRS, an arm of the USDA and USFA that works with land owners about soil surveys. She had found a rock cairn grave that had been marked with a fence post cross. Nearby was a Carsonite Oregon Trail marker and an active spring. Without disclosing the exact location above La Grande, she wanted to know if we knew anything about the grave. I assured her that OCTA did not mark graves with welded fence posts, but would see what I could find out.

Answers to emails to various members, including mapping and marking officer Henry Pittock, came back with news that yes, we did know about the grave, who was in it, and exactly where it was, as well as the fact that

previous Oregon Trail explorers such as Aubrey Haines had seen it and mismarked it (the value of GPS!). In fact there was another, unmarked and unknown grave nearby that the archaeologist missed. The entire "discovery" (I use quotes because the grave had been marked years earlier

by a group of citizens from La Grande) had been documented by Chuck Hornbuckle in his report to NPS after placing the Carsonite marker in 2002.

At the annual picnic in Vancouver in October, we heard a report from Dave Welch about the PIT survey of the condition of the Oregon Trail in 2014. Hundreds of photos and dozens of pages of report will be filed with NPS about what we now know. At least twenty NWOCTA members have increased their knowledge of the Oregon Trail in Oregon. It dawned on me that as a group, NWOCTA knows a lot about the Oregon Trail that is not public knowledge. This knowledge will be lost to future generations if we do not pass it along. Yes, we have to be careful that we don't promote diggers with metal detectors to desecrate the trail or that we don't promote violations of the Antiquities Act. That is probably why OCTA, not cable television, should be promoting the trail.

At this time I have more questions than solutions. The biggest question is how do we prevent the Oregon Trail from being lost when we pass on?



—Jim Tompkins

OCTA in Vale

By Gail Carbiener

The saying “Many Hands Makes Quick Work” certainly was true on Saturday, September 27, National Public Lands Day at the Henderson Gravesite in Vale. OCTA members from Oregon and Idaho watched as four Boy Scouts made short work installing a new interpretive sign.

Tomio Fujino directed three other Scouts, Matt Spence, Devon Wagers and Kade Wagers, as part of his Eagle Scout requirements. The young men, from Boise Troop 100, removed the old and damaged sign, and after digging a two-foot hole and mixing cement, carefully set the new interpretive sign—all within about an hour!

OCTA was pleased to include local Vale residents, BLM employees, the landowner, and of course, the Boy Scouts. All were present in a somewhat rainy but successful day. Rest in Peace Mr. Henderson.

Jerry Eichhorst, Idaho OCTA President, brought about 25 members to Vale. In addition to installing the Henderson sign, there were four cadaver dogs that were challenged to find the grave.

Independently, all four dogs, after searching around all the nearby rocks, sat exactly on the grave. The Idaho group continued on to Birch Creek and Farewell Bend with the dogs and observant BLM archaeologists to look for suspected graves in that area.

Randy Brown, OCTA National Graves and Sites Chairman, drove all the way from Wyoming bringing both the Henderson and Alkali Springs interpretive signs. Both he and Gail Carbiener replaced the Alkali sign in a spitting rain.



Alkali Springs



Tub Springs

Randy and Gail continued on to Tub Springs and tightened a loose sign prior to calling it a day.

Farewell Bend to Eastbound Deadman Pass

By Stafford Hazelett

Having been asked by friends and my brother to lead them on a grand tour of the Oregon Trail from Idaho to Oregon City some day, the opportunity arrived with the announcement of the Oregon Trail interpretive project. We accepted formal responsibility for the country from Farewell Bend to the eastbound rest area at Deadman Pass. But once we committed to travel as far as Farewell Bend, we knew it would not be much more effort to carry out a grander project. We wanted to see the whole thing, which meant we drove through some of the same ground as other groups, and coordinated with them to make sure the final result reflects the entire route. It ended up requiring two trips.

The first trip had six adventurers. Dwayne and Jan Foley supplied their vehicle and did almost all the driving. Along for the ride were Wendell and Lynn Baskins and Marcus and Stafford Hazelett. The first day, we drove to Ontario stopping at all the rest stops to read and document the Oregon Trail kiosks.

Our second day began with a meeting at the Snake River south of Adrian where BLM archaeologist Jennifer Thiesen joined us. We documented the sites as we drove to the ford crossing the Owyhee River and Keeney Pass. At Vale, we had lunch next to the interpretive sign for the Meek Cutoff. We resumed our journey at the Meeker Marker by the courthouse and made sure to visit every Meeker Marker all the way to The Dalles.

We proceeded through the Malheur Desert and over the back road to rejoin the paved highway at Farewell Bend State Park. We backtracked a bit to the Birch Creek Interpretive Site, and then moved on to the Van Ornum Massacre Grave and Huntington where Jennifer left us. The group drove to Baker City for dinner with OCTA members Jim and Tonie Hambleton.

The next day, we backtracked to the Weatherby Rest Area and followed the Oregon Trail up Sisley Creek and up onto the divide. There we met an old friend of the Oregon Trail who insisted that we should go through his gate and hike up to where we could stand in the trail and get a really good look at it crossing his place. The white OCTA markers are still in place and show up nicely.

We continued on through Durkee and up the Burnt River to the Meeker Marker at Straw Creek Ranch. Here, again, we met an old friend of the Oregon Trail who came out to chat with us. While we were there, another Oregon Trail enthusiast showed up, looking for the Meeker Marker, and could not find it until we moved back so he could see it. We left with the owner talking to the new arrival.

We toured the sites of Baker City and then went out to Virtue Flat and the National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center. Stafford got us lost on the ranch roads, but eventually we found our way to the hillside above the flats for the view from the Oregon Trail looking toward the Interpretive Center and the peaks of the Eagle Cap Wilderness. We toured the Interpretive Center and hiked the grounds. Continuing on our way to La Grande, we stopped at the sites near North Powder and enjoyed our evening meal at the Haines Family Steak House.

After a night in La Grande, we backtracked, again, to the top of Craig Mountain for the overlook to the Grande Ronde Valley. We followed the upland version of the emigrant road along Foothill Boulevard to Gekeler Park and then up B Street to the Meeker Marker. We were planning to tour the Blue Mountain Crossing Interpretive Park but the park was closed. That allowed us to devote more time to Emigrant Springs State Park, where Wendell showed the

marks made by wagons passing by some of the old trees. We pressed on to the eastbound rest area at Deadman Pass to document the trail segments there before we descended to Cayuse by the old highway. We stopped at the bottom of the hill to see where the emigrant wagons came down and entered the Umatilla River valley. We traveled on to see the Meeker Marker at its new location on Tutuilla Creek before we joined OCTA members Roger and Susan Blair for dinner in Pendleton.

The next day we covered all the sites from Pendleton to the Meeker Marker at The Dalles. Among the highlights were the Echo Meadows Ruts, Lower Well Spring and Gilliam Grave, Fourmile Canyon, and the descent to the east bank of the John Day River by the Rock Creek route taken by Abigail Scott and about one-third of the emigrant diarists. The John Day River was in full flood at the time and the ford was not accessible. We looped around to come back down to the ford of the John Day River on the west bank and then drove up the alternative route of the Oregon Trail to Emigrant Springs. From there we took the old roads along the Oregon Trail route all the way to The Dalles and completed the tour at the Meeker Marker at The Dalles.

Three weeks later, Marcus and Stafford Hazelett returned to finish the work at Baker City with Wendell Baskins. The next day, the Hazeletts and Wendell toured the Blue Mountain Crossing Interpretive Park with the assistance of Erik Harvey and Ann Moore of the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. With some additional work at Deadman Pass, and the next day at Echo Meadows, the field work was done. The paperwork takes longer than the field work, and we would do it all over, again, but we would probably take a couple more days and see it in less of a hurry.



Marcus Hazelett, Dwayne and Jan Foley, and Lynn and Wendell Baskins at descent to Swayze Creek.

Jan and Dwayne Foley, Marcus Hazelett, and Lynn and Wendell Baskins at Echo Meadows.



The Barlow Road from The Dalles to Oregon City

By Henry Pittock

As part of the NPS-funded Trail Inventory Project, Paul Masee has been in charge of the Barlow Road portion from The Dalles to Oregon City. Other team members who have participated are Billy Symms, Rich Herman, new member Drew Harvey, and Henry Pittock.

In June, our team spent two days working from The Dalles, through Dufur and Tygh Valley, to near Gate Creek. We used public roads to get as close to the designated trail as possible in each land section and selected a representative location. At each of these locations, we took eight photographs to obtain a panoramic view, took a GPS reading, and sketched a map of the surrounding setting, noting such things as power lines, fences, buildings, roads, etc. – essentially anything that was man-made. This was all on public roads, both paved and gravel. Two of the locations we inventoried were the descent of Tygh Ridge down to Tygh Valley, then the ascent on the south side of the valley.



July's trip was for three days. We started at the Philip Foster Farm in Eagle Creek, working our way east through Sandy, Brightwood, Zigzag, Rhododendron, and Government Camp. Sites surveyed included the Francis Revenue DLC and the second tollgate (1853) just north of Sandy, Rock Corral, Sandy River crossing near Zigzag, the Tollgate east of Rhododendron, Laurel Hill, Government Camp, Still Creek campground, and Summit Meadows.

In August, we started at the Pioneer Woman's Grave and the East Fork of the Salmon River crossing. From Barlow Pass we drove the gravel/dirt/rutted FS 3530 Barlow Road past Devils Half Acre, Palmateer Meadows, Grindstone Campground, Barlow Creek Campground, Barlow Crossing Campground, White River Station Campground, and ended the day at the crossing of the White River. The next day we went past Forest Creek Campground, Immigrant Springs and ended at Gate Creek.

September took us to the Gate Creek area again. Jim and Sallie Riehl and Stafford Hazelett joined Henry and Paul for the day, walking about 1/3 mile of Class I ruts on the Forest Service land just west of the Davis Ranch and walking the “improved” road down to the north bank of Gate Creek. After circling around to the south side of Gate Creek, we walked the area that was the location of Samuel Barlow's first tollgate (1846) and subsequent homesteading. We then drove about three miles of heavily rutted dirt and rock Barlow Road before heading back to Government Camp where we all enjoyed pie and coffee at the Huckleberry Inn before heading our separate ways.

The remaining portion from Oregon City to Philip Foster Farm will be surveyed in mid-October. We are looking forward to pavement!!!

When finished, we will have stopped in about 130 different sections. The work will then be turned over to Dave Welch who is the project coordinator. Dave will then send it on to the National Park Service.



OCTA Volunteer Report

By Bill and Jeanne Watson

For this 2014 fiscal year, Congress cut each Federal Agency an additional 5%. That is 10% below the frozen 2012 budget. However, because of our OCTA reports, Congress restored all cuts in our Park Service Trails Office budget for this year.

Jeanne & I hope to make it to Washington, DC for February 2015 Trails Advocacy Week. That will complete our three decades of representing OCTA before Congress.

NW OCTA Volunteer Report

By Chuck Hornbuckle

The summary for NW OCTA volunteer hours and expenses for October 1, 2013, to September 30, 2014, is: **19,607.5 hours; 73,695 miles; and \$46,614.29 expenses.**

Please report your hours, miles driven, and other expenses for 2014 to Chuck Hornbuckle, Chapter Volunteerism Coordinator

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Material may be submitted via email, on disk, or as email attachment in Word or Text format. Pictures (JPG format) may be sent via email, on disk, or originals for scanning. **Please send pictures separately from text document.**

MASTHEAD: Replica of *The Old Oregon Trail* bronze relief sculpture created in 1924 by Avard Fairbanks for Oregon Trail monuments.



A Bonanza of Trails

**2015 OCTA Convention
Lake Tahoe, California
September 20–26**

Northwest Trails

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