



# Northwest Trails

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

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Fall 2019

## 2019 OCTA Convention in Santa Fe

OCTA's 37th Annual National Convention, *A Blending of the Trails*, was held in Santa Fe, New Mexico, September 3–8, 2019, hosted by the Southern Trails Chapter. The convention hotel was the Hotel Santa Fe. The Welcome Reception on Tuesday evening at the New Mexico History Museum opened the convention. The next day the annual membership meeting and keynote speaker took place in a tent at El Rancho de las Golondrinas, a living history museum near Santa Fe. OCTA's annual Awards Banquet (with Native American cuisine) was held Wednesday evening at the Hotel Santa Fe.

Thursday and Saturday were tour days, and on Friday, there were fourteen speakers in concurrent sessions at the Hotel Santa Fe and the nearby Santa Fe Farmers Market. That evening, OCTA's traditional Live Auction and Authors' Night was held at Farmer's Market, with a dinner featuring New Mexico cuisine. Saturday's closing barbecue dinner featuring entertainment by nationally known Red Steagall was at the Hotel Santa Fe.

All and all, it was thoroughly enjoyable convention with a variety of extraordinary meals, activities, and speakers in a spectacular southwestern setting.



*Hotel Santa Fe.*



*Red Steagall.*



*Incoming OCTA president Lee Black, outgoing president Pat Traffas, and incoming vice-president Dick Waugh.*



*Farmer's Market venue.*

## NW Chapter Directory

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NW OCTA will hold an election this fall for president, vice president, and two directors. Please contact Roger Blair, 541-969-7660 if you are interested. The work is not burdensome but is vital to the organization.

## President's Message

*By Rich Herman*

The weather is starting to cool off earlier than in years past, resulting in some restrictions to our outdoor activities. Even though we are having an early fall, we have had some successful activities.

Paul Massee accepted an invitation to speak to a group of residents at a senior living and retirement facility in the Puget Sound area. They wanted to hear about the Oregon Trail, and he did just that, but he said that it was more than that. They were surprisingly enthusiastic and wanted to share their own ancestral stories. He said that he was impressed and felt like he learned a thing or two about the Washington story.

Henry Pittock put together a trail outing to the Davis Ranch located on the Barlow Road on the southeast side of Mt. Hood, just west of Wamic, OR. The last time our chapter placed Carsonite marker on this segment was approximately nine years ago, and surprisingly all of them were still in good condition. It was a nice warm and sunny fall day, well attended by members from both sides of the mountains. Our host Pat Davis indicated he would be interested in having a T-Rail marker on his property after Henry explained our effort at permanent marking.

Sallie Riehl and Gail Carbiener both put together an excellent program in La Grande, OR. at our annual picnic. The event on Saturday, September 28, was intended to introduce local residents to OCTA and its mission and to host some of our new members in the area. A lot of interesting conversations went on during our lunch time, and you could feel the enthusiasm of our guests who had questions about the trail. We had good attendance of our membership who braved the bad weather forecast for the Blue Mountains with snow and heavy frost for our return to the balmy west side. Thank you again to Sallie and Gail.

Good news from headquarters that Sharon Brown has received approval for another year as the Western Region Representative. Sharon has been an asset to the NW Chapter by making us aware of funds which are available for mapping and marking and also with her attendance at chapter events.

Sallie and I will be entertaining options for our spring 2020 annual meeting location. If you have ideas you would like us to consider, please contact Sallie with your thoughts. Remember, Sallie will be the chapter president beginning January 1. Feel free to contact her with your ideas and suggestions about our chapter and how we can make it more successful.



# OCTA's Strategic Plan

*By Sharon Brown*

There will be a review and revision of the OCTA Strategic Plan next year, starting with a one-day facilitated workshop (in addition to a board meeting) to be held during the mid-year symposium in Yuma, Arizona, in February 2020. The five-year plan expires in 2020, and revisions, reviews, and board approval of a final plan are expected to be completed by September. Chapter members will be encouraged to review and provide comments on the draft plan.

## NW OCTA Mapping and Marking Report

*By Henry Pittock*

I think we had a good fall season. Robin Baker led a hike on Laurel Hill in July. Sharon Brown reports on the new signs that were installed in August in conjunction with the Mt. Hood National Forest.

On September 17, Drew Harvey, Robin Baker, Rich Herman, and Henry Pittock made a quick trip to the Davis Ranch to make final plans for the upcoming hike there on the 21st. The day started out rainy, but by the time we got to our picnic spot at the Rock Creek Reservoir, it had stopped. It was overcast at the ranch, but thankfully no rain. We found all the Carsonite markers and decals that we had installed in 2010 to be in excellent condition.

On the way to the Davis Ranch on the 21st, Drew, Robin, Rich, Sharon, and Henry stopped at the US 26 road cut through Laurel Hill. We installed a Carsonite marker at the tree line on the west side of the cut, then headed for the Davis Ranch.

A little bit more to add to Sharon's article on the hike. Somehow, the leader (me) managed to get everyone lost for about 20 minutes – sorry about that. After eating our lunches at the ranch, we drove several miles to the FS 150 road, taking that to FS 3530, the road that is designated as the Barlow Road. We then hiked a very long half-mile to the north bank of Gate Creek to end the day.

This will be the last article I write as the Mapping and Marking officer. It has been a pleasure doing this job, and I feel honored to have been appointed to the position. But it is time to let someone else lead the wagons. Drew Harvey is taking over the position, so please get in touch with him (or Sallie Riehl) if you have ideas for outings.

I would like to express my gratitude to all those who helped in many different ways: Robin Baker, Theresa and Steve Fisher, Drew Harvey, Paul Masee, Steve Bingold, Rich Herman, Sharon Brown, Dave Welch, Stafford Hazelett, Wendell Baskins, and so many, many others.

### **It's Time to Turn in Your Volunteer Hours and Expenses to OCTA**

Submit your information online at [octa-trails.org](http://octa-trails.org)  
Click on Volunteer Hours Submission on the right side of the top bar  
Required Fields: Volunteer Name; Email Address;  
Number of Hours, Mileage, Unreimbursed Expenses



# NW OCTA Laurel Hill Hike on July 20

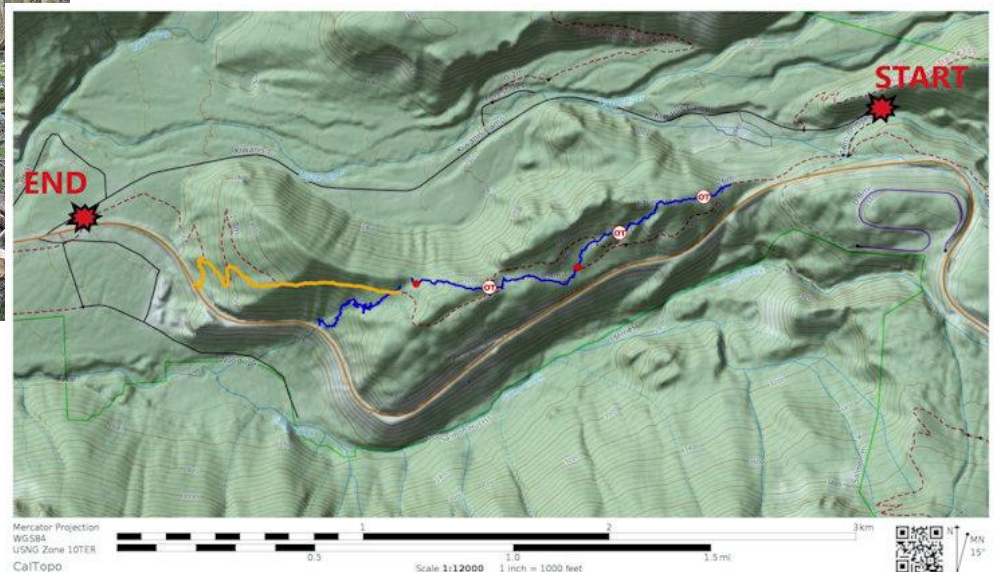
*By Robin Baker*

Four enthusiastic rut-walkers— Robin Baker, Theresa Fisher, Steve Bingold, Jennie Miller—met at the Zigzag Ranger Station on Hwy 26 on Saturday, July 20, for a hike on Laurel Hill that had been planned for several months. We had a signup sheet at the annual meeting, and emails had been sent out to these prospective hikers, including a detailed map. We drove to the beginning of Kiwanis Camp Road and left a car for our return journey, then drove to the end of the road to begin the hike. We started up a portion of the Old Loop Highway to the Pioneer Bridle Trail, then walked west to the saddle across the freeway from the Heritage Marker. Here we left the Pioneer Bridle Trail and hiked up the ridge, soon encountering an Oregon Trail marker post placed by the Forest Service in 1993 for the Sesquicentennial Celebration. This portion of the Barlow Road is rarely hiked and is relatively undocumented. It is shown on Stephen Dow Beckham's maps, but is not shown on Jim Tompkins' maps.

Soon we left the crest of the ridge and angled down to the SW, above the prominent rockslide along the Pioneer Bridle Trail. Following the road ruts, we continued to angle downhill to the SW, encountering another Oregon Trail marker post along the way. We eventually reached the Pioneer Bridle Trail, west of the rockslide. We walked west on the trail, then left it and climbed a short hill to the NW. There is a third Oregon Trail marker post here. We continued NW, down the other side of the hill we had climbed and followed road ruts down to a saddle next to the Pioneer Bridle Trail.

We had lunch here at "Hunter's Camp," a fairly large, flat, mossy area with a fire pit. After refueling and rehydrating, we walked the Pioneer Bridle Trail west to where it crosses a broad ridge, then left the trail and headed down an obvious wagon road on the west end of Laurel Hill. We walked down the wagon road until it met the Pioneer Bridle Trail again about halfway down the hill, then followed the trail/road around the next switchback in a broad wagon turn, then left the trail again to follow the wagon road as it angled down to the freeway. Once at the freeway, we walked back to the car we had left at the beginning of Kiwanis Camp Road.

All in all, we hiked about 4 miles, half of it "off-trail" through light brush and blowdown, nowhere very difficult. A very enjoyable hike following the Barlow Road ruts over a section that is seldom hiked. We will schedule a return trip over this section in 2020. Hope to see you there!





# Barlow Road Trail Signs

*By Sharon Brown*

There are four new Oregon National Historic Trail signs in place along the Barlow Road on Mt. Hood in Oregon. Sunday, August 4, was a beautiful summer day on the mountain as NW Chapter members Rich Herman and Henry Pittock, OCTA Western Region Representative Sharon Brown, and US Forest Service/Mt. Hood National Forest Recreation Manager Matt Ramich installed the signs at Tollgate, Laurel Hill, Barlow Pass, and near Pioneer Woman's Grave. Visitors, including hikers and mountain bikers, will now know they are following the traces left by thousands of overland emigrants who were so close to the end of their journeys.

This was a true partnership project. The NW Chapter, National Park Service/National Trails Intermountain Region, and US Forest Service/Mt. Hood National Forest contributed expertise, funding, and labor toward the planning, design, fabrication, purchase, and installation of the signs.



*Rich Herman and Henry Pittock digging a post hole at the Tollgate site.*



*Installed sign at the Tollgate site.*



*Installed sign at Laurel Hill.*



*Installed sign at Barlow Pass.*



*Sign at Barlow Pass.*



# Barlow Road Hike on the Davis Ranch

*By Sharon Brown*

Saturday, September 21, was a beautiful end-of-summer day in northwest Oregon, and OCTA NW Chapter members took advantage of the sunshine by hiking a segment of the Barlow Road on the Oregon National Historic Trail. They were hosted by Pat and Margaret Davis, owners of a private ranch outside of Wamic, Oregon, and they tested their sense of direction (and GPS units!) by following about a mile and a quarter of trail marked by Carsonite markers, installed about nine years prior. Distant views of Mt. Hood appeared through a landscape of ponderosa pine and scrub oak. Just another day of camaraderie and wonder out on the trail!





## NW OCTA Annual Fall Meeting La Grande, Oregon, September 28, 2019

The chapter had a successful meeting at the public library in La Grande, including four members attending a fall meeting for the first time. The business meeting included reports on the Barlow Road signs, steel T-Rails the chapter is installing, and the Barlow Road hike on the Davis ranch. Mark Miller, Park Manager at Emigrant Springs State Park, and his associate Brenda Garrick talked about the park and new trail ruts nearby. Roger Blair showed a delightful slide show of the OCTA convention in Santa Fe. Roger Blair also presented the chapter's Distinguished Service Award to Ronnie Allen for finding a lost Meeker monument (now at the Baker City interpretive center) and providing a replica that was placed at a trail site. Gail Carbiener showed a PBS video, *Finding the Old Pioneer Trails*, about OCTA and Trails West efforts of preserving parts of the California Trail. After a picnic lunch and the ever-popular raffle, people drove to the Meeker trail site six miles south of La Grande.



*Sally Riehl talking to the group assembled at the public library in La Grande.*



*Dennis Larsen, Ezra Meeker authority, and Ronnie Allen with his award plaque.*



*Mark Miller talking about Emigrant Springs State Park and Oregon Trail ruts.*



*Rich Herman drawing raffle tickets, seen at the moment he drew his own ticket. He then turned the drawing over to Paul Masee (on the left).*

# Meeker Monument at Lower Ladd Canyon

*By Susan Badger Doyle*

In 1906 Ezra Meeker placed a rock monument at Lower Ladd Canyon, six miles south of La Grande, Oregon. Meeker dedicated the monument on April 11, 1906, one day after dedicating another one in La Grande. The audience at the Lower Ladd Canyon site included 25 children from Ladd Canyon School, about four miles away. The site is on Hot Lake Lane, near the Century Farm owned by Dale Counsell. Counsell's father remembered seeing the monument along Hot Lake Lane in the 1920s, and then it disappeared.

Years later, Ronnie Allen, who lives in La Grande, began searching for it and eventually found it in 2017 in a yard in south La Grande. The owners of the property had placed it among flowers. Allen purchased it and donated it to the Oregon Trail interpretive center near Baker City, where it is now displayed.

Allen wanted it to be placed at its original location, so he made an exact replica and located it in the same location as the original. The site is part of Oregon's Department of Fish and Wildlife's Ladd Marsh Wildlife Area. There is an interpretive sign and a farm wagon behind the monument.

After the NW OCTA meeting, Ronnie met the group at the site. EO Media reporter Dick Mason was there and wrote articles for local newspapers.



*Meeker monument site.*



*From left: Roger Blair, Ronnie Allen, Gail Carbiener.*





# Paul Massee Sr. Met Ezra Meeker in 1906

*By Paul C. Massee Jr.*

My father, Paul C. Massee Sr., came to La Grande, Oregon, as a young child around the turn of the last century with his parents and five other siblings. Their father and my grandfather, Herbert S. Massee, had been approached by friends to leave his dairy in Wisconsin and establish a creamery in the Grand Ronde Valley of eastern Oregon. Paul and some of his sisters were enrolled in the elementary school in La Grande when Ezra Meeker made his historic retracing of the Oregon Trail in 1906. According to my father's version of the story, it was customary for Ezra to pause at the outskirts of each town and have the schoolchildren assemble around his wagon. Ezra would tell them the history and importance of the Oregon Trail and why the trail should be memorialized with a marker in certain locations. He then asked the children to solicit one dime from their families, and if they could collect about three dollars total, a monument could be purchased and placed in their locale.

My father at the time was a second-grade student and was eight years old. For some unknown reason Ezra selected my father from a few dozen fellow students to ride through La Grande on his covered wagon. What a thrill it must have been for him to be seated next to Ezra Meeker as they rode through the streets of Old Town La Grande!

There's no telling how the next monument at Ladd Hill was funded. Maybe the generous folks in La Grande raised another three dollars to get the job done!

## NW OCTA Steel T-Rails



*Gail and Muriel Carbiener delivering a load of T-Rails in eastern Oregon. This stop was at Pendleton Department of Parks and Recreation, where one will be placed near the Meeker monument (seen in the background).*

# *Northwest Trails*

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



## **2020 OCTA Convention**

*Through the Lens of History  
- Preserving the Past -  
Focusing on the Future*

**September 19-23**

**Elko, Nevada**