



# Northwest Trails

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

Volume 36, No. 2

Spring 2021

## Chapter Annual Meeting on Zoom Saturday, April 17, 2021

Please come join us on Saturday, April 17 for a general chapter meeting on Zoom. We want to meet as many members as we can at this meeting so we can inform you of our plans for trail tours; the OCTA convention in Elko; the need for people to help install T-Rail signs; and to answer any questions you might have about the chapter and the trails.

We have three short programs to show you presented by Roger Blair (advertising the Oregon Trail); Dave Welch (about mapping and marking the trails), and Robin Baker (the eastern side of the Barlow Trail). It has been so long since we have been able to plan a meeting in person with all of you, and I hope you can attend this substitute "Meet & Greet."

The meeting will be from 1:30 to 3:30 in the afternoon, and if needed we can go longer. Polly Jackson will send out the link to the program a week or so before the meeting.

See you there!  
Sallie Riehl

## Chapter Membership Report

*By Chuck Hornbuckle, Membership Chair*

Since January 1, 2021, nine new members have joined us in our overnight camp. In addition, two "New to OCTA" members were invited to join the Northwest Chapter, and both accepted. Our NW OCTA membership now stands at 248 in spite of the pandemic.

If you are a new member to our chapter, I am curious what inspired you to join NW OCTA. With that thought, I would like to invite new members to write a short history of their background and interests in our western heritage, especially the Oregon-California Trails Association.

If you are willing to share your interests please send it to my email address shown on page 2 of this newsletter, and your story will appear in our next issue. If I don't get any takers, I will draw straws and select someone. This invite is also open to existing members who have their story to share. You may find a new "Trail Cousin" amongst our membership.

## NW Chapter Directory

### **President**

Sallie Riehl

### **Vice President**

Bernadette Hammelman

### **Treasurer**

Glenn Harrison

### **Secretary**

Jenny Miller

### **Directors**

Roger Blair

Polly Jackson

Dave Welch

### **Chapter Website**

Polly Jackson

### **Communications Chair**

Marley Shurtleff

### **Mapping and Marking Chair**

Drew Harvey

### **Membership Chair**

Chuck Hornbuckle

### **Preservation Officer**

Gail Carbiener



## **Northwest OCTA**

## **President's Message**

I hope many of you will join us on Saturday, April 17, on Zoom for our General Chapter "Meet and Greet." Since we are still limited to very small groups because of COVID, we decided to hold a virtual meeting so we can at least see everyone's face and enjoy some conversation in real time. Roger Blair, Dave Welch, and Robin Baker will present short programs for your entertainment. The meeting will be from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. and can run longer if we need to talk more.

This summer the chapter will install 10 T-Rail signs along the Oregon Trail in eastern Oregon. We have received a grant from the Oregon Community Foundation to purchase the rails, and we have matching funds to carry out the project. The T-Rail signs are made of railroad track, and we attach metal plates to the rails that usually contain diary quotes about the particular area where they are located. These signs are very resistant to vandalism and the cattle who like to rub on them when they are placed in open range. Please let me know if you would like to work on this project.

We have a new Western Regional Representative, Isobel Lingenfelter. She is available to help us with any trail projects or National Park Service activities that become available. She will be working on a special project for the B2H mitigation plan this spring.

The Clackamas County Heritage Council is planning a celebration in October for the 175th anniversary of the Barlow Road. There is more information in this newsletter about the event on page 6.

We are so happy to hear that Gail and Muriel Carbiener have finished their vaccinations and are now able to get out and about. I certainly hope that any of the rest of you who are eligible for the shots will take them. We really want to get back out on the trail.

Sallie K. Riehl,  
Chapter President

## **NW Octa Funds**

*By Glenn Harrison, Treasurer*

As we are getting through the worst of COVID-19 and the weather is warming, we are getting ready for trail outings and placing trail markers. We currently have \$24,505.72 in the NW OCTA account, so we are ready to get to work and have fun together. As projects and activities are announced, hopefully you will be able to participate or lead chapter activities.

# T-Rail Information

*By Gail Carbiener*

The T-Rail is a railroad rail cemented in the ground with an aluminum plate engraved with a diary quote of the area close by the location. The post is usually placed in the rut/swale or close by. The California/Nevada and Utah chapters have done many as well as Trails West. Northwest Chapter has about 15 in the ground with opportunities for many more. There are opportunities for members all along the way, but especially needed is a coordinator.



**THE RAIL:** The rail is a used railroad rail, obtained from Harmer Steel in Portland. Phone: 503-286-2097. Size is very important, especially the “fishing” or flat center of the cross piece, since it must hold the aluminum plate. **THE ORDER:** 75-lb ASCE #1 Relay Rail – 10 pieces at 6’ length and 10 pieces at 1’6”,

welded top centered, with 18” upper section drilled with two 5/16” holes drilled 10” on center apart. Each rail when completed will weigh 187.5 lbs.

**COSTS:** The rails cost about \$1,900 and are paid out of chapter funds and sometimes in part by the Oregon Community Foundation Oregon Trail Fund. The fund application is on-line and easy to complete. Funds require a 1 to 1 dollar match. **Oregon Community Foundation**, 1221 SW Yamhill St., Suite 100, Portland, OR 97205; (503) 227-6846; [info@oregoncf.org](mailto:info@oregoncf.org).

**PICK-UP & DELIVERY:** It is important that the rails be picked up soon after construction. In the past, a U-Haul trailer has been used, usually making two trips due to weight. A volunteer with a large one-ton truck has volunteered: His name is Mike Nelson, 509-525-4510, (no email), and lives at 1012 SE 12th Street, College Place, WA, near Walla Walla. Mike has said he can store the rails until needed. Another spot to store rails is at the Doug Wright, Union County Public Works and Airport Director, P.O. Box 1103, 10513 N. McAlister Rd. La Grande, Oregon 97850, 541-963-1016.

**LOCATION:** The Oregon Trail, Barlow Road, and Meeks Trail all are good trails to mark. In Oregon very few locations have a steel rail. The Mapping and Marking Committee has a form for the property owner to complete. Current rails are either in or close to the actual trail. Some are close to highways and easy to reach, others are on private property and require permission and a long hike.

**ALUMINUM PLATES:** Are provided and engraved (free) by Matt Sweeney. Wonderful guy who lives at 14201 Bessemer Street, Van Nuys, CA. 91401. Email [matt@sweeney-special-effects.com](mailto:matt@sweeney-special-effects.com). Plates are 12" long and 2-1/2" wide. We have used a 1/8" thick plate. We use a title, with letters about 5/8" tall, centered. Then four lines of text with letters 1/4" tall. The two holes

are 5/16" diameter at 10" wide at center, and 1-1/4" center vertical. All have title of Oregon Trail.

DIARY QUOTE: We attempt to use a diary quote that is near the location of the post. Since we only have four lines of text, we cut and paste without losing the meaning of the quote. At the end of the four lines, we give the emigrant's name and date of quote.

INSTALLATION: It is best to fix the aluminum plate to the post prior to putting the post into the ground. Use stainless steel bolts, washers, and nuts. After tightening, peen the end of the bolt so it is more difficult to remove. Since the emigrants moved from east to west, that is the proper direction of the top cross-piece, aligned in direction of the trail. The post should be about 18" or two feet into the ground and secured with cement. Be sure to take a level to position the post. Other tools you may need are a wrench, shovel, digging bar, bucket for water, and wheelbarrow to mix cement. Record the GPS location for Mapping and Marking Committee.

Send proper "thank you" to all volunteers, property owners, and government personnel.

SCOUTS: This is a great project for an Eagle Scout. The young men and women can do the heavy lifting as well!!

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## Chapter Zoom Meetings

*By Dave Welch*

The Colorado Chapter has provided a steady stream of entertaining Zoom meetings on a variety of trail-related topics. The Zoom format is in some ways better than a presentation at a chapter meeting.

We have had a couple of mapping-related meetings, but I would like to encourage others to make presentations. Do you have a trails topic that you would like to share with the membership? It need not be a formal presentation. A meeting option might be a group of fifteen-minute discussions on a variety of topics. Member submitted questions could be addressed. Suggestions welcomed.

I will set up the Zoom meeting if you all will provide content. If you know of speakers outside of OCTA, please send me their contact information.



# Gift Card Scam Emails Associated with NW OCTA

*By Polly Jackson*

Recently, some members of the NW OCTA chapter leadership received emails asking them to buy gift cards for someone in the chapter. I received two of those emails. They are scams. You will never receive a valid email asking you to buy a gift card for the chapter.

One email I received appears to have information that was gathered from the NW OCTA website. It has "OCTA- Northwest Chapter" as the subject. It appears to come from a chapter leader. I almost got caught by this one, it is very convincing. Then I noticed that the return email address was not correct, and some phrasing was a little weird. So I did not reply to it. I labeled this as Spam in my email.

This is what the text said:

*Hello Polly*

*Are you able to assist? I am unavailable now and I've got credence in you to take care of this. I would have called your phone but I presently do not have access to my mobile phone. OCTA- Northwest Chapter needs some gift cards for donation to Veterans at Hospice and Palliative Care units for preventive items from Corona Disease (COVID 19). I am liable for reimbursement. Need more?*

I received another email from someone in the chapter whose account was hacked. That email asked for gift cards but did not mention OCTA. That is a more generic form of this scam. This is some of the text from the generic version:

*I need a favor from you.*

*Sorry for the inconvenience. I need to get a Google play gift card for my nephew, its his birthday but i can't do this now because I'm seriously ill and my doctor said I should stay indoors for some reasons. I have tried to purchase it online but unfortunately no luck with that, can you get it from any store around you? I'll reimburse you as soon as possible. Let me know if you can handle this.*

This is a popular scam. It works by sending you an email like you see above, that looks like it's from someone you know. There are no links or attachments. Most email programs may not mark it as spam, because there are no links or attachments. If you reply to this email, they will email you back with specific instructions for what type of gift cards to get and the amounts. Usually this will be hundreds or even thousands of dollars, often in the form of multiple cards. For example, four cards for \$500 each. After you buy the cards, you are asked to email the card information and pin number to the person. That gives them access to the money on the card which they will take immediately. You will never hear from them again. Your money is gone.

What can you do about this?

- Never reply to anyone asking you to buy gift cards.
- If you think it's real, contact the person directly. Either call them up or send a separate email. Do not reply.  
Make sure it's real before you spend any money.

- Look for anything that seems off in an email. Weird phrases like “Corona Disease” instead of “coronavirus.”
- Make sure the email address is correct. But still be careful, as they can make it look like it came from a correct and known email address.
- If it seems weird, don’t do anything. Do not click on links. Do not reply. Do not open attachments.
- If it appears to be from someone you know, contact that person directly to let them know what’s going on.

Here is an article about the gift card scam:

<https://www.freep.com/story/money/personal-finance/susan-tompor/2019/06/20/can-you-do-me-favor-scam-asks-gift-cards/1485645001/>

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## **175th Anniversary of the Barlow Trail Clackamas County Heritage Council**

Dear Friend of Oregon History,

The Barlow Road will be 175 years old this year, and the Clackamas County Heritage Council thinks that’s a milestone worth noting.

This is the story YOU want to share this October, in “Perspectives Along the Barlow Road,” a series of live and online presentations. We are calling on historians, pioneer descendants, native tribes, foresters, and anyone else who has a viewpoint to share. Specifically, you or your organization may have:

1. Speakers who can present a perspective for 15-40 minutes and take questions, regarding the road, its history, its travelers.
2. Video presentations of 15 to 50 minutes about the Barlow Road, or more broadly the Oregon Trail.
3. Resources to promote, such as books, movies, websites with accurate historical information, which we can share in presentations and on our website.
4. Sites who want to host small groups of guests along with a video conference.
5. Organizations willing to send invitations to their mailing list and social media outlets.
6. Technical expertise with online seminars or video conferencing.
7. Art or performance pieces inspired by the Barlow Road Experience.
8. Wagons or other artifacts to exhibit.
9. Connections with local historians or specific information to include.

Contact: [clackamasheritage@gmail.com](mailto:clackamasheritage@gmail.com)

## Ben Johnson Mountain

The Oregon Geographic Names Board (OGNB) voted in favor of the proposed name change of Jackson County's "Negro Ben Mountain" to Ben Johnson Mountain, honoring the life of the first known Black homesteader on the mountain. The new name has been forwarded on to the U.S. Geological Survey with OGNB's recommendation. If approved nationally, Ben Johnson Mountain will become the feature's official name on all maps.

Ben Johnson was a Black man born in Alabama in 1834 who came to Oregon in 1853. He settled in a Jackson County community called Uniontown along the Applegate River. On a mountain near town, he built a blacksmith shop where he lived and worked between 1868 and 1869 at the height of the area's mining boom.

By 1870, Johnson had left Jackson County and settled in Albany, Oregon where he married Amanda Gardener, a former slave, and continued to work as a blacksmith. He died in 1901 at age 66. The 4500' mountain where Johnson's cabin stood sits south of the tiny town of Ruch in the Rogue River National Forest, near today's Cantrell Buckley County Park. At some point while Johnson lived there or just after, the mountain became known as "N---er Ben Mountain". The name stood as official until 1964 when the U.S. Geological Survey's Board on Geographic Names changed the mountain's name to Negro Ben Mountain.

Read more on the Oregon Black Pioneers' website at  
<https://oregonblackpioneers.org/.../success-oregon.../>



*Ben and Amanda Johnson.*

# *Northwest Trails*

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**PUBLISHED QUARTERLY, SUBMISSIONS DUE**  
**January 1, April 1, July 1, October 1**

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.



## **38th OCTA Convention**

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

**September 13-16, 2021**

**Elko, Nevada**