

With a pandemic restricting our ability to travel and socialize, it is not surprising that visitors to our nation's historic and scenic trails surged as people sought a socially distant, family-friendly experience in the great outdoors. Visits were up 50 to 100 percent in some areas.

Most of the Oregon and California National Historic Trails have remained open and accessible. **Our trails are thriving and strong because OCTA members like you care enough to enjoy and invest in the power of the outdoors.**

As you consider year-end giving opportunities, your financial support for the mission of OCTA has never been more important.

The pandemic has provided an opportunity for OCTA to undertake several new initiatives to stay in contact with our members and reach new audiences. All-in-all it has been an exciting year:

- We began filming a series of short videos along historic trails or at historic trail sites, featuring them on our YouTube channel.
- We added both an Instagram page and a Twitter feed and greatly beefed up our Facebook page, inspiring many of you to travel on your own to highlighted sites along our trails.
- Because we had to postpone our national convention in Elko, we undertook one of the largest fundraising initiatives in our history to recover lost revenues – and OCTA members responded in inspirational numbers.
- As Chapter meetings were cancelled by pandemic restrictions some chapters launched Zoom events to bring entertaining and informative speakers to you.
- A few chapters ventured out on car caravan treks, keeping social distancing and mask wearing at the fore to keep everyone safe while also enjoying the camaraderie of fellow trail advocates.
- The annual Fernley Swales cleanup went on as planned in Nevada and a trail restoration project was completed in California.
- The Trails Head Chapter and several other chapters launched new or updated websites with incredible resources such as interactive maps, diary quotes, chapter histories, and much more!

As we hopefully come out of the pandemic, 2021 is shaping up to be one of our busiest years.

We are planning for the Elko Convention next September and the Casper Convention in 2022. There are ongoing talks about co-hosting a symposium in conjunction with the Mormon Battalion Association in San Diego in January 2022, and we are considering some small events in spring or early summer 2021. All are contingent, of course, on pandemic and social-distancing requirements.

Last year, OCTA joined with the national trails community in celebrating the passage of the Great America Outdoors Act, which permanently reauthorized the Land and Water Conservation Fund to the tune of \$900 million every year. The legislation also authorized millions of dollars to address a backlog of maintenance projects in the National Park System. A big goal for 2021 will be to make sure needs are addressed on the trails we represent.

Two major initiatives before Congress that will require attention in 2021. First, we want to push the **Butterfield Overland Trail Designation Act (S.4404)** across the finish line, creating a new 3,300-mile National Historic Trail. Second, we will be pursuing legislation to add **26 routes totaling 7,589 miles** to existing California, Oregon, and Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trails, as recommended by the National Park Service. Getting legislation through Congress is a time-consuming, often frustrating process and will require tremendous help from OCTA members.

Our trail advocacy and protection efforts remain strong because people like you care enough to invest in the power of the outdoors. We have learned to thrive in new ways, whether via the use of technology or by careful group planning designed to keep everyone safe.

As we look to 2021, we ask you to please help us to continue thriving by making a year-end donation today. Your support for OCTA's mission of preservation and protection has never been more important.

There is no shortage of threats to the trails, from power lines in Oregon and Nebraska to mining in Nevada to development that threatens to encroach upon the trails at many locations along the Oregon and California trails. We must remain vigilant!

Your support will help us respond to these and other threats. Without your support, our efforts will be severely handicapped. Please consider, with our gratitude, a year-end gift to keep OCTA strong in the challenging times ahead.

Sincerely,

Lee Black
President

P.S. The Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES) includes a provision allowing taxpayers who do not itemize deductions to deduct up to \$300 for contributions to nonprofit organizations like OCTA. If you do not itemize deductions, this may be of interest to you.