

**THE BECKWOURTH EMIGRANT TRAIL:
USING HISTORICAL ACCOUNTS TO GUIDE ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELDWORK
IN THE PLUMAS NATIONAL FOREST**

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The Beckwourth Emigrant Trail Project was created by the Forest Service for the purpose of composing a detailed and comprehensive site record that was done by archaeologists. In 1851, James Beckwourth built the wagon road to accommodate travelers in search of gold. It ran from Sparks, Nevada to Bidwell's Bar, California. Historical General Land Office (GLO) maps and survey notes were used in conjunction with Andrew Hammond's field maps to identify trail segments. The segments were located and compared with historical documentation of the trail's route. This paper will juxtapose the approximate location of the trail according to the historical documentation with the segments located in the field, categorized according to Oregon-California Trails Association (OCTA) standards for trail classification.

From 1851 to 1855 the Beckwourth Emigrant Trail was the favored route for those seeking their fortune in the California gold rush. The wagon trail proved effective in getting these travelers over the Sierra Nevada mountain pass and into gold country, despite its extremely difficult route. When the railroad displaced the wagon routes into California, the trail fell into disuse. In 2009, Forest Service archaeologists from the Feather River Ranger District, in partnership with Mt. Hough Ranger District in Plumas National Forest planned to use historical accounts and maps to locate and record existing segments of the trail, beginning the first formal recordation of the Beckwourth Emigrant Trail.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

James Pierson Beckwourth was born in Virginia in 1798 (Figure 1). Trained as a blacksmith, Beckwourth found little enjoyment in that trade and longed for a life of adventure. He soon joined several expeditions, traveling through the Midwest as an explorer, fur trapper, and tradesmen. During this time, he lived several years with the Crow, claiming that they believed him to be a long lost son (Bonner 1972). He has been described as “a man who learned to straddle cultures, bridging the traditional divides of race and ethnicity to become one of the most famous frontiersmen in American history” (National Park Service 2010). Once gold was discovered in California, Beckwourth, along with many others, found themselves drawn to the west in search of glory and wealth.

In 1850, Jim Beckwourth discovered what is now known as Beckwourth Pass, a way to get through the rugged terrain of the Sierra Nevada mountains and into the gold fields in California. By 1851, he had cut a trail and led the first wagon train over the pass and into Marysville, California (Sabin and Krupp 1993). The beginning of the trail, a branch off of the California Trail, started in Sparks, Nevada and traveled a distance of 200 mi. to the mining camp of Bidwells Bar, California, which is now within the depths of Lake Oroville. The trail helped cut a significant amount of time from the difficult journey that wagon trains made to the mining towns of California by way of Donner Pass and Lassen's Cutoff. Beckwourth petitioned the city of Marysville for funding to build the trail. He was promised \$10,000 for his efforts, but a tragic fire in 1851 left Marysville unable to pay him. The trail received heavy use up until 1855, when the railroad succeeded it as a more popular form of transportation. During the height of the trail's use in 1852, Beckwourth established a trading post and built his own cabin along the route (Sabin and Krupp 1993).



Figure 1: Jim Beckwourth.

Throughout the years, the trail sustained significant damage, with portions being abandoned, others turned into park trails, and some improved into gravel wagon roads. Today, much of the trail is overlain by modern roads or is now lost due to development, logging, and exposure to the elements. While no longer a viable hiking trail, portions of the Beckwourth Trail can be seen from the Oroville-Quincy Highway and are identified with OCTA and Trails West markers.

METHODOLOGY

Historical Research

Forest Service archaeologists researched historical records at both private and public libraries, consulted historic GLO maps and field survey notes, reviewed aerial photographs, and assessed Mount Hough and Feather River ranger districts' files. Local historical societies and museums also provided contextual information regarding the Beckwourth Emigrant Trail, in addition to information about other historic-era passes, and methods for identifying features of a wagon road.

Field Methods

Forest Service archaeologists with the Plumas National Forest's Feather River Ranger District (FRRD) performed an archaeological investigation during the 2009 field season to locate and record original segments of the wagon trail, and then to compare them with historical documentation. Jamie J. Moore, FRRD District Archaeologist, directed the project in partnership with the Mount Hough Ranger District.

The trail was previously recorded and mapped between 1990 and 1994 by Andrew Hammond. In addition to the maps, Andrew and Joanne Hammond (1994) wrote *Following the Beckwourth Trail*. With these two resources, and following the guidelines written in *Mapping Emigrant Trails* by OCTA (2002), crews performed intensive reconnaissance survey to look for physical evidence of the wagon trail, including swales, ruts, berms, rock alignments, and blazes on older trees, creating the first formal recordation of the Beckwourth Emigrant Trail by Forest Service archaeologists.

Each Trails West marker was located and then followed along the mapped route at transects of 10 to 15 m apart, looking for evidence of the historic trail. Once located, segments were recorded using state Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) forms and placed into one of three categories (see Analytical Methods). A Primary Record provides location information and a chart categorizing each segment. A Linear Record gives specific locations and directions to each segment, a brief description of the segment, what type of damage occurred at both ends, associated archaeological resources, and whether or not the segment concurred with diary accounts. A Location Map supplies the position where the segment lies on a USGS 7.5-minute topographic map. In addition to the Location Map, a cross-section sketch and a site sketch map were drawn for each segment (Figure 2).

Most segments were mapped using a Trimble GPS unit with TerraSync software where satellite signals were available; some segments were hand-plotted where satellite signals could not be obtained. Digital photos were taken using a Sony Cyber-Shot camera at the most prominent part of each segment, along with the measurements of width and depth. The length was either taken from the corrected GPS data or paced where GPS could not be used. Each segment that was recorded was required to have physical linear evidence of a trail, and then it was documented as to how much the trail resembled an historic trail. OCTA markers were often found along clearings that could not be identified as trail segments. Associated artifacts were noted on the site forms but not formally recorded.

Analytical Methods

Segments of the Beckwourth Emigrant Trail were classified by revising the OCTA rating system for historic trails. OCTA's categories include the following five classes:

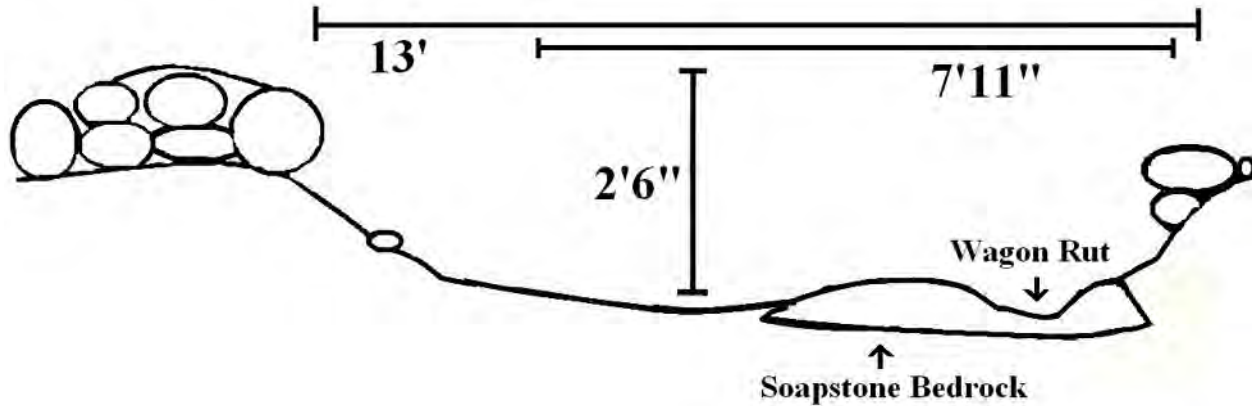


Figure 2: Cross section sketch of Segment 12. (Drawn by B. Denham)

Class 1 - Unaltered Trail. It retains its original character.

Class 2 - Used Trail. It retains elements of its original character, but shows use by motor vehicles.

Class 3 - Verified Trail. It is accurately located and verified, but trail traces are nonexistent or insignificant.

Class 4 - Altered Trail. It is verified, but elements of its original condition are permanently altered.

Class 5 - Approximate Trail. It is obliterated or unverifiable; its location is known only approximately.

Each Beckwourth trail segment was placed into one of three categories, which were taken from the Hammonds' maps and OCTA's classification system and modified slightly as follows:

Category 1: The trail retains the essence of its original condition. It is visible as ruts, swales, dirt side berms, stacked linear alignments, or other scars. This category is equivalent to OCTA's Class 1 (Figure 3).

Category 2: The trail is evident, but it has been subjected to light vehicle use. This category is equivalent to OCTA's Class 2 (Figure 4).

Category 3: The route is assumed, but the traces are nonexistent or insignificant. This category is a combination of OCTA's Class 3 and Class 5 (Figure 5).

OCTA's Class 4 was omitted due to the entirety of the Beckwourth Trail being altered in varying degrees; therefore the use of this class would be redundant.

Research Design

Pre-field research determined that the historic emigrant trail could be associated with a specific person, Jim Beckwourth. The issue at question was whether or not the physical evidence would match diary accounts, Trails West and OCTA's marked routes, and the Hammonds' documentation. The following questions were also considered during the exploration:

1. Can the segments lead to further knowledge of Beckwourth Pass?
2. How long was the trail in use? Is it still in use, or was it ever used for another purpose?
3. If the site is deemed eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, how can archaeologists protect and/or mitigate further damage to the remaining segments?



Figure 3: Category 1 -- Segment 6. (Note: All photos taken by Forest Service crew during the 2009 field Season, FRRD, Plumas National Forest.)



Figure 4: Category 2 -- Segment 13.



Figure 5: Category 3 -- Segment 17.

DATA PRESENTATION

Crews located 27 segments of the original Beckwourth Trail with a total length of 25,051 ft. The top width ranged from 12 ft. to 22 ft. The depth ranged from 1 in. to very large trenches of up to 6 ft. deep. These segments were recorded along the Oro-Quincy Highway, beginning at French Creek Road on the Brush Creek 7.5-minute quad and continuing to the Mount Hough and Beckwourth ranger districts' boundary on the Mount Ingalls 7.5-minute quad.

Segment 1 is above the intersection of the Oro-Quincy Highway, French Creek Road, and Stephens Ridge Road. It retains its linear shape, with a length of 492 ft., a depth of 9 in., and a bottom width of 9.9 ft.; it has little or no evidence of berms or other historic-period features. Stephen's Ridge Road destroyed the western side of the trail, with both light vehicle use and modern debris present. Stephen's Ridge and French Creek roads destroyed the eastern side. The segment was given a Category 2 rating due to its poor to fair condition. There were no associated resources found at this location.

Segment 2 is also at the intersection of the Oro-Quincy Highway, French Creek Road, and Stephens Ridge Road. The segment stretches 395 ft. northeastward from the intersection of French Creek Road and the Oro-Quincy Highway and stops at a logging road that lies between French Creek Road and the wagon trail. It has a 7.5-ft. bottom width with slightly visible, 9-in.-deep berms. Due to the segment having been impacted by modern roads to the south and a logging road to the north, this segment was

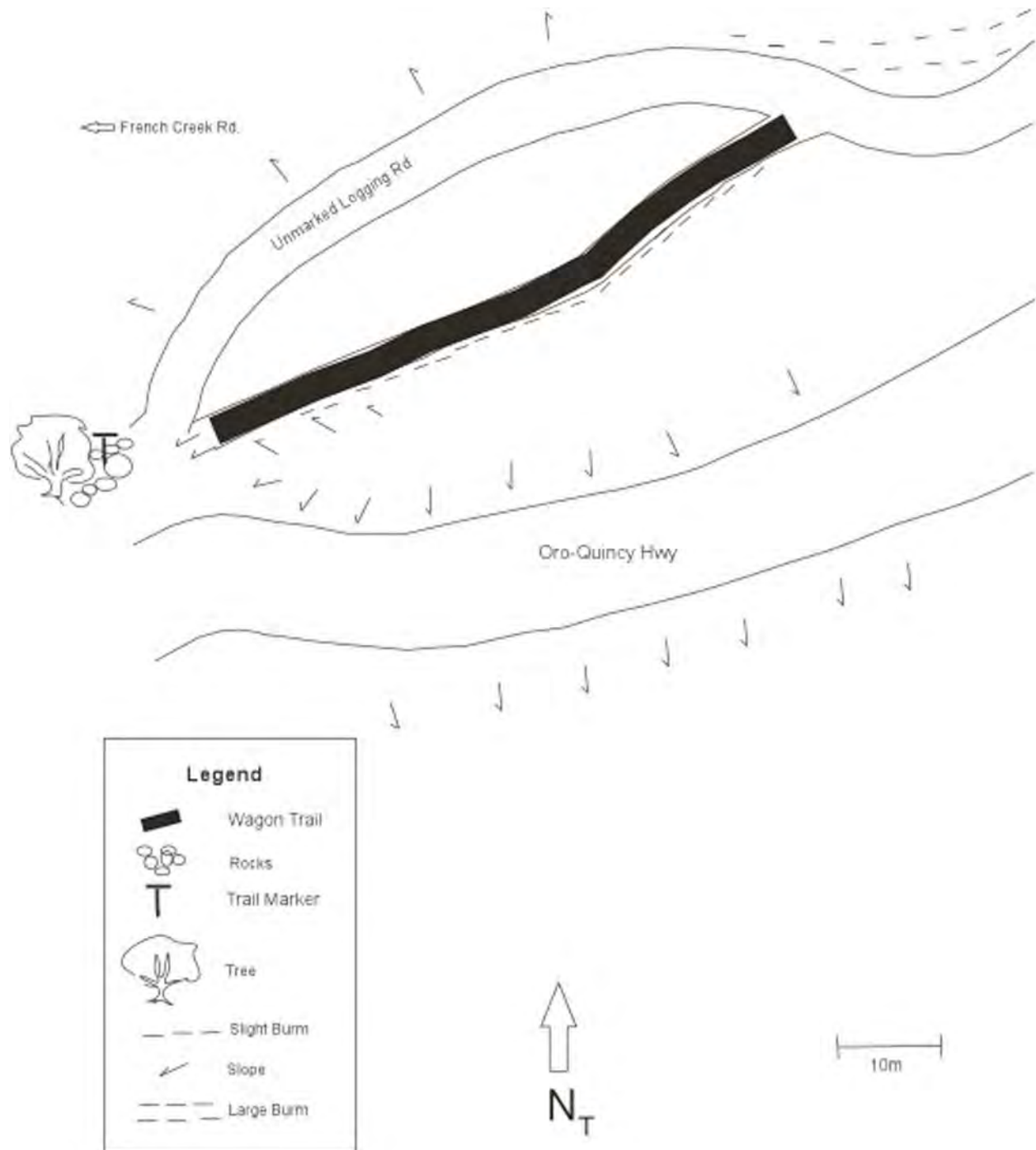


Figure 6: Sketch map of Segment 2. (Drawn by B. Denham)

given a Category 2 rating. There are modern cans and bottles sparsely scattered, and the segment is highly overgrown and covered in duff (Figure 6).

Segment 3 is west of the Oro-Quincy Highway, parallel to Forest Service (FS) Road 21N37X, and runs south along the ridgeline. The westernmost point is near the highway and an unmarked logging road, and the easternmost point is between the highway and logging road on a railroad grade. The trail is 173 ft. long, with an 8-ft. bottom width. It was given a Category 1 rating because of the large rocky berms

and cut surface 4 ft. 5 in. deep, which remain intact. However, there is brush cover on the road pad. The southern portion was destroyed by the railroad grade and logging road, which also served as an electric power corridor. The northern side has been covered by the Oro-Quincy Highway. There were no associated resources found at this location.

Segment 4 is at the intersection of the Oro-Quincy Highway and FS 24N25G and slopes north toward private property. It is 591 ft. long, with an 11-ft. bottom width. A 6-ft.-high berm on the west side starts at the southern end and recedes as it climbs northward. The northern portion of the trail fades into the forest, while FS 24N25G and FS 23N60G destroyed the southern edge. This segment of the wagon trail is heavily impacted by modern use due to accessibility from the Oro-Quincy Highway and FS 24N25G; therefore, it was rated Category 2. There were no associated resources found at this location.

Segment 5 is off FS 23N15 near a Trails West marker. The trail is 558 ft. long with an 11-ft.-3-in. bottom width. It has a high berm on the east side and a slight berm on the west side with a depth of 2 ft. 8 in. It is heavily covered by brush and small trees. Water bars created by bulldozing occur across the wagon trail at various intervals, and the slope increases beyond the first water bar. FS 23N15 destroyed the southern edge, and the northern edge disappears into the forest. This segment was rated Category 2 due to the effects of modern road construction and a footpath that crosses and then parallels the wagon trail. There were no associated resources found at this location.

Segment 6 runs northwest to southeast, parallel to the Oro-Quincy Highway. The northernmost point begins at the entrance of Four Trees, and the southernmost point intersects the highway. The segment is 1,160 ft. long. It has an 8.5-ft. bottom width and 2-ft.-4-in. depth. Stacked rocks and boulders line the sides of the trail. It is also partially covered with gravel. There is a parallel segment 26 ft. to the west, which has smaller berms. The construction of the Oro-Quincy Highway destroyed the south side; likewise, construction of FS 23N28 destroyed the north side. This segment was classified as Category 1. The associated resources include wire and cut nails and two wooden posts, one with wire nailed to it and the other with drill holes. The northern side is discernible by a Trails West marker.

Segment 7 runs southwest to northeast next to the Four Trees parking lot, north of FS 23N28 and west of the Oro-Quincy Highway. The southernmost point begins at the entrance of Four Trees, and the northernmost point stops near the highway. The segment is 204 ft. long. It has a 6-ft.-5-in. bottom width and consists of a deep cut with rocks piled along the berms and crushed rocks that line the surface of the trail. The construction of the Oro-Quincy Highway destroyed the north side, and the construction of FS 23N28 destroyed the south side. This segment was classified as Category 1. The southern side is discernible by an OCTA trail marker. There were no associated resources found at this location.

Segment 8 runs northwest to southeast on the south side of the Oro-Quincy Highway. The northernmost point begins at a turnoff from the highway and is discernible by an OCTA marker. The southernmost point stops at a logging trail. The trail retains a linear shape, with a length of 441 ft., a bottom width of 8 ft., and a depth of 6 in., but there is little evidence of berms or other historic-period features. There is a deep rut, but it is not clear whether it was created by wagons or motor vehicles. This segment was classified as Category 3 because it has been severely impacted by modern road construction and use, and by logging activities. There were no associated resources found at this location.

Segment 9 lies on the east side of the Oro-Quincy Highway, beginning just south of Frog Rock. The trail is 2,556 ft. long, has a bottom width of 8 ft., and has a depth of 5 ft. 5 in. The southern portion of the trail consists of a deep swale, which has been integrated into an Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) trail. The middle part of the segment is flatter and less visible, but it becomes more prominent further north, where there is a large wagon rut in the soapstone (Figure 7). There is modern cutting in the soapstone as well. This segment is aligned with OCTA markers, and a Trails West marker was placed on the northern edge. It was classified as Category 2 due to the OHV use. Both sides were destroyed by the construction of the Oro-Quincy Highway. There were no associated resources found at this location.



Figure 7. Wagon ruts in soapstone. Segment 9.

Segment 10 runs west to east on the north side of the Oro-Quincy Highway just past Frog Rock, across the highway from the north side of Segment 9. Soapstone boulders border the trail along the berms for most of the segment. The trail is 418 ft. long, has a bottom width of 8 ft., and has a depth of 1 ft. 5 in. The western edge was destroyed by the construction of the Oro-Quincy Highway. The eastern edge disappears into a field of whitethorn, and logging activity most likely disturbed the soil. This segment was classified as Category 1. Associated artifacts consist of one non-diagnostic metal plate and one metal clip or binder loop.

Segment 11 also runs west to east on the north side of the Oro-Quincy Highway. Soapstone lines the west side of the route in large quantities. It branches into two parallel roads in the middle of the segment, with a high berm separating them. Both branches dissipate in an area with extreme logging activity on the east side. The trail is 716 ft. long, has a bottom width of 8 ft. 10 in., and has a depth of 3 ft. 10 in. The westernmost point was destroyed by the construction of the Oro-Quincy Highway, and the easternmost point ends in close proximity to FS 23N61Y. This segment was classified as Category 1. Both sides are discernible by an OCTA trail marker. There were no associated resources found at this location.

Segment 12 is on the north side of the Oro-Quincy Highway, across from FS 23N61Y. There are evident berms and rocks lining the route. Two wagon ruts were found in the soapstone on the southern half of the segment. The trail is 1,408 ft. long, has a bottom width of 7 ft. 11 in., and has a depth of 2 ft. 6 in. The southern edge disappears short of the highway into the forest, and the northern edge was destroyed by the construction of the Oro-Quincy Highway. This segment was classified as Category 2

because logging activities heavily impacted it. An OCTA trail marker sits on the north side. An historic-period insulator was observed on a fallen tree, indicating its use as a telephone corridor.

Segment 13 is on the east side of the Oro-Quincy Highway, across from FS 23N08X. This segment consists of a shallow cut into the north side of the hill. There are small granite boulders strewn along the side of the trail. It is 426 ft. long, has a bottom width of 8 ft., and has a depth of 1 ft. 5 in. The southern edge disappears into the brush, and the northern edge was destroyed by the construction of the Oro-Quincy Highway. This segment was classified as Category 2 because logging activities heavily impacted it. An OCTA trail marker sits on the north side. There were no associated resources found at this location. The segment matches the 1870 notes by Battelle for T23N R6E section 21.

Segment 14 runs southeast of the intersection of the Oro-Quincy Highway and FS 23N60X. It continues upslope along the ridgeline. It is aligned with small rocks and has very slight berms. The road is lined with gravel, which appears to be modern. It is 961 ft. long, has a bottom width of 8 ft., and has a depth of 1 ft. 5 in. The construction of FS 23N60X destroyed the northern edge, and modern road construction, mining, logging, and other forest activities destroyed the southern edge. This segment was classified as Category 2 because of said damages. The northernmost point near FS 23N60X is discernible by an OCTA marker. There were no associated resources found at this location.

Segment 15 begins near the intersection of the Oro-Quincy Highway and FS 23N07X, on the southeast side of the highway. It travels along the ridgeline parallel with the highway and continues northeast toward Quincy. The southern edge is very visible, but there are no prominent berms. Two blazed trees are present at the northern edge. The trail is 222 ft. long, has a bottom width of 8 ft., and has a depth of 6 in. The northeast side of the trail has been heavily impacted by logging and hillside erosion. The southwest side disappears into a meadow. This segment was classified as Category 3. There were no associated resources found at this location.

Segment 16 is at the intersection of the Oro-Quincy Highway and FS 23N73Y, and runs parallel to the highway. This segment has slight berms except at the western end, which has moderate berms and a steep down-slope swale. Rocks are sparsely piled along the berms. Much of the segment is barely visible, due to logging disturbances. The trail is 2,480 ft. long, has a bottom width of 9 ft. 6 in., and has a depth of 5 in. The westernmost point was destroyed by the construction of FS 23N73Y, and the easternmost point disappears into the Letterbox town site. This segment was classified as Category 3. An OCTA trail marker sits on the west side near FS 23N73Y. Contemporary debris was found along various parts of the trail, including beer bottles, beer cans, and mayonnaise containers. The segment matches the 1870 notes by Battelle for T23N R6E sections 11 and 12.

Segment 17 lies south of the Oro-Quincy Highway between FS 23N95Y and FS 23N85Y, and continues along the ridge. There is no evidence of berms or other historic trail features. A considerable amount of logging damage is present; therefore, it was difficult to determine whether or not this section is actually part of the Beckwourth wagon road. The trail is 908 ft. long, has a bottom width of 13 ft., 8 in., and has a depth of 1 ft. Logging activity destroyed both the northern and the southern edges. This segment was classified as Category 3. An OCTA trail marker is present on the southeast side. There were no associated resources found at this location. The segment matches the 1870 notes by Battelle for T23N R6E sections 12 and 13.

Segment 18 is northeast of Frenchmen Hill. This segment is difficult to see in places because of logging activity. It is fairly short and located on the hillside near the Oro-Quincy Highway. There are wagon ruts present at the north and middle portions. The trail is 159 ft. long, has a bottom width of 9 ft., and has a depth of 4 ft. The northern edge was destroyed by the construction of the Oro-Quincy Highway, and the southern edge disappears into a meadow and has been affected by erosion. This segment was classified as Category 1. A Trails West marker sits on the north side near one of the wagon ruts. There were no associated resources found at this location.

Segment 19 is at the northeast edge of the Whitehorse Campground, on the south side of the Oro-Quincy Highway. This segment is notable by its large swale and high berms. The trail is filled with small

pine and fir trees; otherwise, it is in good condition. It is 66 ft. long, has a bottom width of 8 ft. 2 in., and has a depth of 4 ft. 3 in. Construction of the highway destroyed the northern edge. The southern edge begins on a cut bank of Whitehorse Creek and was destroyed by the creek and the development of the campground. This segment was classified as Category 1. There were no associated resources found at this location.

Segment 20 is near the intersection of Bucks Summit Staging Area and the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT). It is initially a part of the PCT but eventually branches off to the northeast down the ridgeline. The segment becomes hard to follow toward the northeast side, where there is an intersection of logging roads. The trail is 2,381 ft. long, has a bottom width of 8 ft., and has a depth of 9 in. The southwestern side was destroyed by logging, underground cable construction, and traffic along the PCT. The northeast side nears private property and was destroyed by several FS roads, underground cable construction, and logging activity. This segment was classified as Category 2. A Trails West marker sits on the southwest side. There were no associated resources found at this location.

Segment 21 is between Big Creek Road (County Road 423) and FS 24N99X. The trail runs east/west approximately 165 ft. south of the intersection. A swale and large berms are present and intact. The trail is 127 ft. long, has a bottom width of 9 ft., and has a depth of 2 ft. The segment has been heavily impacted by logging, mining, and the construction of the highway and FS road. The west side was destroyed by FS 24N99X, logging, and mining. Big Creek Road destroyed the east side. This segment was classified as Category 2. There is a Trails West marker on the west side of Big Creek Road. There were no associated resources found at this location.

Segment 22 is southeast down a gravel road across the highway from the intersection of Big Creek Road and FS 24N99X. The segment has very high berms, with small trees growing within the swale. There are also logs and debris in the route. The trail is 155 ft. long, has a bottom width of 8 ft. 2 in., and has a depth of 3 ft. 4 in. Erosion and mining have affected the segment. A creek cuts off the northwest end. The southeast side travels upslope and disappears into the forest. This segment was classified as Category 1. There were no associated resources found at this location.

Segment 23 is north of Gopher Hill near FS 24N25X and runs northeast to southwest along the ridge down a 20-degree slope until it intersects the Spanish mines and stops at a mining cut on the mountain side. There are several ditches running adjacent to and intersecting the wagon road. There is motor vehicle traffic and erosion, making evidence of swales and berms minimal to nonexistent on most of the trail. However, there are berms and a swale present on approximately one-third of the segment, and they are in excellent condition. The trail is 3,116 ft. long, has a bottom width of 8 ft., and is 7 in. deep. The mining cut and ditches destroyed the southern edge. The northern edge was destroyed by equipment related to logging and modern light vehicle traffic. This segment was classified as Category 2 due to the light vehicle use and heavy equipment damage. The ditches and mining cut were the only associated resources observed at this location.

Segment 24 is 0.2 mi. west of the intersection of FS 24N09Y and an unmarked FS road. The segment runs east/west along the ridge and has slight berms, both contemporary and historical. There is no other evidence of historic-era features. The segment has been severely impacted by logging and current light vehicle use. It exhibits heavy erosion from water running along the road, and the segment has been bisected by bulldozer and logging machinery. The trail is 2,227 ft. long, has a bottom width of 7 ft. 5 in., and has a depth of 2 ft. 9 in. Logging destroyed the western side. The eastern side was destroyed by construction the unmarked FS road. This segment was classified as Category 2. There were no associated resources found at this location.

Segment 25 is at the intersection of FS 24N09Y and an unmarked FS road. The segment is in moderate condition and clearly defined by a swale and berms on both sides. Logging and bulldozers have affected the surrounding area. The trail is 426 ft. long, has a bottom width of 4 ft. 9 in., and has a depth of 1 ft. 1 in. The western side was destroyed by FS 24N09Y. Logging equipment destroyed the eastern side.

This segment was classified as Category 1. There is a Trails West marker on the west side of the east half of the wagon road. There were no associated resources found at this location.

Segment 26 is southwest of the intersection of FS 24N02X and FS 24N02XA. The segment is in moderate condition, with both berms evident. The trail travels southwest along the ridge at a 40-degree slope until it intersects FS 23N31Y. While the majority of the trail is highly visible, there has been some disturbance from logging and road construction equipment. The trail is 426 ft. long, has a bottom width of 4 ft., 9 in., and has a depth of 1 ft., 1 in. The northeastern edge was destroyed by FS 24N02XA, which is now overgrown and no longer in use. The southwestern edge was damaged by the construction of FS 24N31Y and by logging activity. This segment was classified as Category 2. There were no associated resources found at this location. The segment matches the 1880 notes by W. Minto for T24N R11E section 21.

Segment 27 is on top of a hill, traveling northeast above a Trails West marker that is posted along FS 24N19. Stacked rocks mark the expected location of the trail along the slope, but the trail itself lies at the boundary of the Mount Hough and Beckwourth ranger districts and travels east/west along the ridgeline. The segment is defined by cobble alignments on each side of the trail, which make slight berms. Although the Beckwourth Emigrant Trail did travel across this ridge, it was expected to be about 65 to 130 ft. south of this location, so it is unclear whether this was the Beckwourth trail or an adjacent road. The terrain is very rocky, lending to the cobble alignment. The trail is 723 ft. long, has a bottom width of 9 ft., and is 1 ft., 3 in. deep. Fire suppression damaged both the eastern and western sides of this segment as a result of machinery moving dirt. This segment was classified as Category 1. The small cairns were the only resources noted along the way, and there were no associated resources observed along the trail segment.

RESULTS

- The Beckwourth Pass is approximately 200 mi. long from Marysville, California to Sparks, Nevada. A total of 2.37 percent of the trail was located and recorded within the Plumas National Forest's Feather River and Mount Hough ranger districts.
- Andrew Hammond mapped a total of 139 of the 200 mi. of historic wagon trail.
- The survey area covered 100 mi. along Hammond's route. Within this survey area:
 - a) crews located 3.41 percent (4.74 mi.) of Hammond's route;
 - b) nearly 10 percent is on private property; and
 - c) approximately 1 percent is currently under water.

CONCLUSION

Hammond accurately mapped the Trails West markers located during the Forest Service survey, with the exception of one that was near Segment 27 on FS 24N19. Hammond mapped the marker about 330 ft. west and down slope from the road where the marker was located. Some OCTA markers were found along clearings that could not be identified as trail without further testing. Seven of the 27 segments had associated artifacts, ranging from nineteenth-century artifact scatters to present-day debris, but none were directly related to the wagon road. Segments 13, 16, and 17 match the 1870 notes by Battelle. Segment 26 matches the 1880 notes by W. Minto. Further research and testing will add to the archaeological record, either supporting or refuting the historical record. Although Beckwourth Pass was not used for its original intent very long, the past 160 years have seen the trail utilized for purposes such as running insulator lines and more modern underground cableways. Some parts of the trail are in continuous use, although they have lost integrity due to the construction of the Oro-Quincy Highway or other off-highway access roads for logging, and to other forest activities, including off-road vehicle use. Archaeologists can mitigate further damage to the remaining segments on National Forest property by

marking and avoiding the areas. They can protect the segments using educational programs to encourage the public to care for the nation's historic places.

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