

LOOKING WEST

Mapping and Trail Inventory Projects

A COMMON MISCONCEPTION IS *that the emigrant trails have been mapped thoroughly and that there is little left to be done.*

In fact, *little* has been mapped at the level prescribed by OCTA's Mapping Emigrant Trails (MET) Manual. The most comprehensive maps were completed by the National Park Service at a scale of 1:100,000 (one inch on the map representing 100,000 inches on the ground), but this scale cannot be regarded as definitive with regards to the trail's actual location. The late Gregory Franzwa's maps use 1:50,000-scale county maps. When the data from these maps is plotted on 1:24,000-scale maps, conflicts with the route as it would have been dictated by topography are obvious. For example, ridges or ravines not obvious on a 1:100,000 map may appear on 1:24,000 scale maps.

Mapping as defined in the MET manual is a time-consuming task. Typically, a workable project area is defined by a single USGS 1:24,000-scale quadrangle. This includes five to ten miles of trail. When we consider that the total

length of the Overland Trail, including all routes and cutoffs, is more than ten thousand miles, the size of the overall mapping project becomes apparent. We should be selective and target segments that contain surviving, high-quality trail. A Trail Inventory Project (TIP) is a means of surveying resources to determine where priority for MET surveys should be placed.

A TIP includes the following:

1. A survey (Form TIP1) of each township, range, and section containing a trail segment (typically about one and a half miles). A standard form is used to record the character of the section and the classification of the trail within. However, the survey does not record data at the level defined by the MET Manual. Classifications are aggregated over the section.
2. A survey (TIP2) of sites within the section that contain trail-related

resources, including a series of photographs from one or more observation points.

3. An evaluation of the trail setting (TIP3). Is the setting evocative of the emigrant's experience?
4. A USGS 1:24,000-scale map of the trail in each section using Terrain Navigator Pro software.
5. Entry of all of the above into a Microsoft Access TIP database.

Once completed, the database permits generation of summary reports identifying those sections appropriate for a MET-level survey and those that may be ignored due to the level of development that has altered that section of the trail. A TIP covering the entire Oregon Trail in Oregon has recently been completed. It was found that about 18 percent of more than 591 sections contain Class 1 or 2 trail and Class I setting.

TIP surveys in Oregon were conducted by four teams that covered four



TIP1 REPORT - TRAIL SEGMENT 30380 003N-029E-36

Sequence No 30380 TWP 003N R9G 029E SEC 36 Trail Name Oregon Trail
 Team Leader David Welch Survey Date 5/11/2015
 County/State Umatilla, OR USGS Quad Name Noim and Echo

NPS High Potential Seg? NPS Seg No. NPS Seg Name
 NPS High Potential Site? NPS Site No. NPS Site Name:
 Reference Maps Bell, Haines, Frances, CMLP, USGS
 Ownership Private
 General Description Descent to the Umatilla River, Coral Springs

Trail Classification % MET 1 or 2: 40 % MET 3 or 4: 60 % MET 6:
 % MET 6: % Undetermined: Setting Class: III

GPS Brand and Model Garmin GPS Map 62 etc

KOP1 Description Entrance to Coral Springs site
 KOP1 Latitude N 45.65794 KOP1 Longitude W -115.13231

KOP2 Description T1P13(020)
 KOP2 Latitude N 45.6933278 KOP2 Longitude W -115.13232

KOP3 Description
 KOP3 Latitude N KOP3 Longitude W

KOP4 Description
 KOP4 Latitude N KOP4 Longitude W

Photos 1: T1P13(020) Highway sign, T1P13 (21) Interpretive panel "Coral Springs"
 2: T1P13(022) "Trail" looking east toward descent to Umatilla River
 3: T1P13(023) Trail over ridge heading NW, T1P13(04) View of valley toward descent
 4: DJV4633-DJW4610: Complete survey of Coral Springs area (5/11/15)

Notes
 T1P2 Completed? T1P3 Completed?

Friday, February 6, 2016 003N-029E-36

The Pendleton survey team gathered at Echo Meadows. (LEFT TO RIGHT) Brian Runyan, Ray Egan, Roger Blair, Susan Doyle, John Cannella (NPS), and Chuck Hornbuckle. PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVE WELCH. INSET: An Oregon TIP.

separate lengths of the Oregon Trail: Snake River crossings to Farewell Bend, Farewell Bend to Deadman Pass, Deadman Pass to The Dalles, and the Dalles to Oregon City via the Barlow Road. The work was conducted over two years.

The survey teams are a great way to introduce new OCTA members to the physical trail. Survey skills are basic (observing, photographing, research, computer data entry) and do not demand a high level of physical fitness. Surveys are often conducted from

roads with supplemental information from aerial photos. Forms and the database are available from the Northwest Chapter's project for projects by other chapters.

At the 2016 Fort Hall convention, I will be presenting a paper on the Oregon TIP and how it could be applied to the Idaho chapter's trail areas. I hope you will be able to attend the convention and my presentation. Each chapter can benefit in many ways from a TIP.

