

IOCTA Spring Meeting 2020

Saturday, May 9, 2020

Zoom Video Conference

Attending

John Briggs
Nancy Briggs
Betty Celaya
Paul Dinwiddie
Dan Dunne
Jerry Eichhorst

Dawn Fazio
Jim Fazio
Lynn Houdyshell
Marge Houdyshell
Gary Kaufman
Afton Patrick

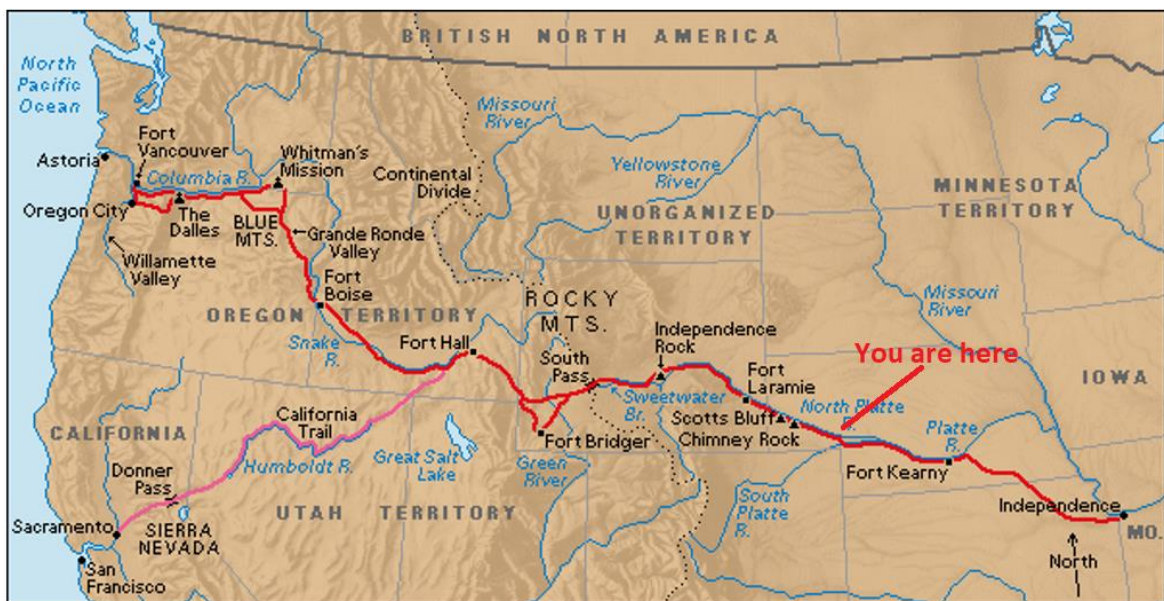
Don Wind
Travis Boley – OCTA Manager
Lee Black – OCTA President
Tara McClure-Cannon – ID State
Parks & Recreation

Opening

Jerry opened the meeting at 10:04 am. This meeting was originally scheduled to be held in Burley, Idaho. Due to the national COVID-19 pandemic lock down the Spring meeting was held using Zoom Video Conference.

Jerry put the COVID-19 lockdown in perspective. The Oregon Trail was approximately 2000 miles long and took roughly 6 months to reach Oregon City. If the lockdown for the current COVID-19 pandemic were a trip on the Oregon Trail, you would be about ¼ of the way to Oregon.

Oregon Trail Missouri River to Oregon City



Minutes of October 5, 2019 Meeting

Minutes of the October 5th meeting at Boise, Idaho were sent out to Executive Committee and approved via email. The minutes are posted on the IOCTA website.

Financial Report – Dan Dunne, Treasurer

Ending balance as of October 5th 2019	\$7,214.09
Income	
Membership Dues	\$950.00
Total Income:	\$8,164.09
Expenses	
October 7th Idaho Pizza Co	\$177.99
Staples paper	\$36.03
OCTA Rosemary Devinney membership	\$50.00
Check #119 Idaho Historical Soc. National Hist Day	\$250.00
Check #120 Jerry Eichhorst Web Master	\$250.00
USPS Stamps	\$66.00
Total Expenses:	\$723.90
Ending Balance – April 23, 2020	\$7440.19
Savings Account Balance	\$170.00

Marge Houdyshell moved that the financial report be approved. The motion was seconded by John Briggs and passed by unanimous vote.

OCTA Board of Directors Meeting

John Briggs reported on the Spring Symposium held in Yuma AZ February 21, 2020

- **MEMBERSHIP:** Although the Idaho Chapter continues to be strongly supported there is continuing slight decline at National level. At year end 2016 there were 1341 members and at year end 2019 down to 1279. March 2020 numbers have held steady at 1283 members.
- **FINANCIALS:** A small net loss in FY 2019 of less than \$10,000. Both Revenues and Expenditures were down slightly. Both the Convention and the Symposium contributed less than expected. The endowment funds were used to make up some of that difference. Note – a lot of attention us being given to FY 2020 given the reduced levels of activity currently being experienced and likely to continue. The SBA ‘loan’ was applied for and received.
- **PRESERVATION:** B2H continues to be an important focus but not the only Preservation issue currently faced
 - R Project – a 225-mile transmission line in Nebraska which crosses the Oregon-California and Mormon Historic Trails.
 - Avangrid Aurora Solar – a Solar Farm on the California Trail near Battle Mountain. BLM sought assistance from OCTA. It was determined that there would be no direct effect.
 - Long Canyon Mine Project in Nevada – impacting the California Trail at Big Springs on the Hastings Cutoff.
 - Wyoming Pipeline Corridor initiative is being monitored by the Wyoming Chapter
 - I-229 improvements in St Joseph – OCTA seeking a consulting relationship given the proximity of a number of Historic Sites.
 - Environmental Impact Statement re Fuel Breaks that BLM is seeking to create in the Great Basin for fire suppression. Idaho is included in this.
- National Park Service Feasibility Study Revision for Additional Routes to the Oregon, California, Mormon Pioneer, and Pony Express National Historic Trails is complete. The only National Historic Trails addition in Idaho was the Bartleson route from Sheep Rock south. Other Oregon Trail additions (North Alternate and Jefferies-Goodale Cutoff) were eliminate because these routes were used after the 1848. The legislation creating the National Historic Trails defined 1848 as the cutoff date for the Oregon Trail. Discussions have been held to

consider contacting Congressional members from Idaho, Oregon, and Washington to see if date can be extended since 75% of people going to Oregon traveled after 1848. There may be an effort from OCTA legislative liaison Bill Martin to have Congress amend other pending bills to include extending the 1848 cutoff date.

The Southern Crossing – All Roads Lead to Yuma Symposium February 21-23

Chapter participants provided comments regarding the Spring Symposium.

- John Briggs

See last *Trail Dust* for article on the symposium

- Paul Dinwiddie

Lisa and I attended the OCTA Spring Symposium in Yuma, Arizona February 21-23. We had a great time enjoying the warm weather, making new acquaintances and learning about the fascinating history and importance of the Yuma Crossing in the early history of westward exploration and migration. The tours of the Territorial Prison and the Quartermasters Depot were very interesting, as were the numerous symposium speakers. My favorite speaker was Doug Hockings' story Terror on the Santa Fe Trail: Kit Cason and the Jicarilla Apache. The Colorado river is tame now – but it was fun imagining the Yuma crossing when the Colorado River ran wild.

- Jerry Eichhorst

I explored the Yuma area that day so missed most of the presentations. Enjoyed the speaker at dinner. Absolutely the worst buffet dinner ever.

- Don Wind

I was impressed with the presentations and tours. Prior to the Spring Symposium, I had never realized the importance of the Colorado River ford at Fort Yuma as a major crossroads. Of particular interest to me was the Quechan Indian Tribe assisting Juan Bautista de Anza and his expedition of 240 people cross the river in 1775. The 1200-mile Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail commemorates this Spanish colonial trek that brought the first non-Native families overland into California. This expedition would eventually reach San Francisco Bay and claim that entire area for Mexico. Also impressive were tours of the Yuma Territorial Prison and Yuma Quartermaster Depot, both along the banks of the Colorado River.

OCTA National Updates

- OCTA E-news sent out by Travis Boley will now include links for the chapter newsletters so everyone can see what is going on across the organization. Idaho chapter *Trail Dust* newsletter is one of the best.
- Travis Boley purchased a Zoom video conferencing license for the OCTA organization to use after Jerry's request. Idaho chapter will pay for the first year (\$149)

OCTA Conventions

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the 2020 OCTA convention in Elko, Nevada has been cancelled for this year. The convention will be held in Elko next year September 13-16, 2021.

The Casper convention is pushed back to 2022. Tentative dates August 28-September 3, 2022

American Solar Challenge 2020 (Sharon Brown)

The Challenge has been postponed until 2021. The challenge was to start in Independence and follow the Oregon Trail to the finish line in Boise. The event was planned for this coming July. The ASC event folks will reschedule the race to follow the Oregon Trail route in June/July 2021.

Chapter Activities

All planned Chapter activities have been cancelled due to COVID-19 concerns. There is the possibly of very limited outing with new cadaver dogs around May 21 at Ditto Creek. Other activities will be scheduled when it is safe to do so.

The fall chapter meeting has been scheduled for October 3 at the Perkins restaurant in Burley, ID, if safe to do so. We would like to do City of Rocks activities originally schedule for this May and a California Trail tour over Granite Pass on days before the meeting. A tour over Granite Pass was snowed last year at this time.

National History Day in Idaho

(Virgel Clark)

IOCTA sponsored a \$250 award for this year's National History Day in Idaho competition. There were no entries relevant for the Oregon Trail award this year. The Idaho Historical Society holding our funds for next year's contest.

American Falls Hydroelectric Project (FERC Project No. 2736)

Idaho Power is starting the process of renewing the American Falls power plant. They made the following statement regarding Oregon Trail impact.

Initial review of existing data indicates that there are no intact segments of the Oregon Trail in the FERC project boundary, and we do not believe that the continued operation of the hydroelectric facility has the potential to affect trail-related resources in any way.

Jerry's reply to Idaho Power:

I disagree with the idea that the dam and lake behind it do not impact anything of the Oregon Trail. The lake and dam cover up the most significant falls anywhere on the Oregon Trail until The Dalles of the Columbia River. Nearly every diarist commented on the falls of the Snake River at that point. The lake also covers the trail from Fort Hall to the dam. However, at this point, there is nothing that could be done about it and nothing to be gained in making a problem of it.

Idaho Power offered IOCTA the opportunity to be included in the distribution list for public notices and meetings related to this process. Preservation officers Don Wind and Virgel Clark, and Jerry Eichhorst will be recipients of all correspondence.

Publicity for OCTA

Jerry provided information on various OCTA publicity items.

- The Post Register newspaper in Idaho Falls published an article: *Death on the trail: Using modern tech to learn Idaho's tragic details of historic Oregon-California trails.*
https://www.postregister.com/news/local/death-on-the-trail-using-modern-tech-to-learn-idaho/article_72d8a7c9-d4f8-5423-b8a2-e7e065defa8d.html
- United Press International website published a similar article: *Cadaver dogs to search for Gold Rush-era graves near Oregon, Calif. Trails*
https://www.upi.com/Top_News/US/2020/04/03/Cadaver-dogs-to-search-for-Gold-Rush-era-graves-near-Oregon-Calif-trails/7841585776002/?upi_ss=eichhorst&utm_source=April+27%2C+2020&utm_campaign=December+29%2C+2014&utm_medium=email
- Cyndy Irvine, a Wisconsin author, is writing a magazine article about Emeline Trimble, one of the survivors of the Utter attack. Jerry Eichhorst has provided guidance, quotes, and pictures.
- Committee Films of Minneapolis, Minnesota, has contacted Jerry. They are interested in the Oregon Trail massacres Jerry has been researching. Committee Films produced "America Unearthed" on the A&E Network and has done shows for ABC, History Channel, Travel Channel, HGTV, and MSNBC is beginning a new project which follows a pair of modern-day explorers, former police detective Terry Prochaska and his friend Mark Holt, as they use all-terrain vehicles to bring their audience to places they normally couldn't. Together, they explore hidden mysteries in the American wilderness.

With no further business the business portion of the chapter meeting was adjourned at 10:32 am. After the meeting the following speakers made presentations.

Tara McClure-Cannon – City of Rocks Archaeologist

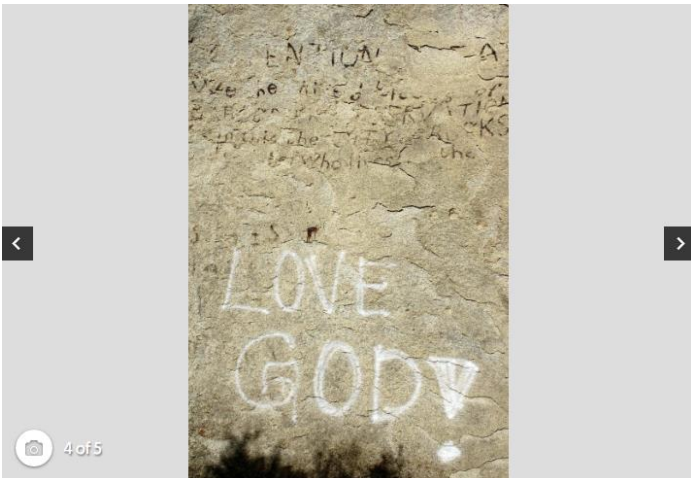
Tara gave an update on the recent vandalism and repair efforts at City of Rocks. Camp Rock was tagged with graffiti sometime between April 24 and April 26. The vandalism was extensive and devastating, covering approximately 225

square feet of the rock. Federal authorities have completed their on-site investigation and released the area. The challenge now is to identify a solvent and cleaning process to remove the paint and protect the porous rock and emigrant signatures.

A City of Rocks Restoration Fund has been created on the GoFundMe website to accept donations. The IOCTA Chapter committed to donate \$1,000 to aid the restoration. (Note: The Chapter has subsequently donated \$1,100 through the GoFundMe site – an additional \$100 was added to cover the GoFundMe 10% handling fee).

The City of Rocks Restoration Fund GoFundMe account can be reached at:

<https://charity.gofundme.com/o/en/campaign/city-of-rocks-restoration-fund/friendsofidahostateparksinc>



Travis Boley – OCTA Manager

Travis gave an update from National OCTA. Highlights include:

- OCTA has a new Digital Media Communications intern. Look for an increased presence on Facebook, OCTA E-News and YouTube channel. Travis encouraged everyone to subscribe to E-News if they haven't already.
- Due to COVID-19 the 2020 convention in Elko, NV has been postponed to 2021. The Wyoming chapter agreed to push out the convention in Casper to 2022.
- Due to the postponement of the Elko convention OCTA faces a budget challenge for the next six months.
- In an effort to increase membership OCTA is looking into ways to appeal to younger and more diverse demographics.

Lee Black – OCTA President

Highlights from Lee:

- Lee acknowledged that the Idaho Chapter is the model OCTA chapter
- OCTA needs to look for avenues for growth through new social media efforts and sharing history through Senior and Retirement centers, schools etc.
- Through Facebook and YouTube OCTA now has new international members from France and The Netherlands.
- Lee thanked Don Wind and Virgel Clark for their work as preservation officers

Submitted by Paul Dinwiddie