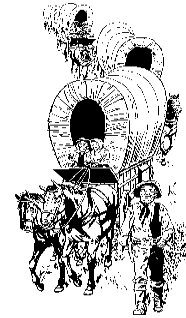


# Trail Dust

Newsletter of the Oregon-California Trails Association, Idaho Chapter  
Vol. XXIII Issue 2 *Suzi Pengilly, Editor* July 2011



## Idaho OCTA Activities 2011

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<b>July 23</b>	<b>Main Oregon Trail Back Country Byway Work Day</b> California Trail Tour—Oakley to Hwy. 93 <b>CANCELLED</b>
<b>August 8-13</b>	<b>National Convention</b> Chapter Meeting Rock Springs, WY
<b>September 17-18</b>	<b>Hudspeth Cutoff Tour</b>
<b>October TBD</b>	<b>Chapter Meeting</b>

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### **Byway Work Day and Massacre Search Planned for July 23**

Due to the high cost of gasoline and the unavailability of a qualified leader, the California Trail tour planned for July 23 has been cancelled. Instead, a working outing to straighten several concrete posts along the Main Oregon Trail Back Country Byway is planned. Participants should meet at the Pilot Truck Stop at Exit 95 of Interstate 84 in Mountain Home at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, July 23.

The group will straighten the concrete posts along Teapot Road east of Highway 20, 8 miles north of Mountain Home. Several are already leaning badly, and one has fallen over. Bring a shovel, rock bar, post hole digger, and gloves. After the posts are straightened, the group will

head to Soles Rest Creek to search for a possible massacre site. Please bring your metal detector if you have one. Certified cadaver dogs will be used in the search.

RSVP to Jerry Eichhorst if you will be joining him that day. Check the calendar page on the website for complete details.

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## Hudspeth Cutoff Tour

Doug Jenson, Lyle Lambert, and Fred Dykes will lead a 2-day tour of Hudspeth Cutoff on Saturday, September 17, and Sunday, September 18. The group will meet at the park along the Portneuf River in Lava Hot Springs at 9:00 on Saturday. From here, the tour will proceed to the area where the Hudspeth Cutoff separates from the Oregon Trail west of Soda Springs. A trip over Fish Creek Hill and viewing of the remaining ruts climbing over the ridge to the west will be followed by viewing of the cemetery ruts in Lava Hot Springs. Sunday the group will head west of I-15 towards the junction with the Raft River route. Please RSVP to Doug Jenson to sign up for this tour. ***This tour may be cancelled if not enough people sign up to attend by September 1.*** Check the calendar page on the website for final details.

## Message from the President

*By Jerry Eichhorst*

What a great spring it has been! We have several new members in the last two months. We had a tremendous turnout at the Glens Ferry meeting and byway tour. 35 people attended the meeting and 30 joined me on the tour. We had another good turnout for the North Alternate hikes on June 25. It is exciting to see so many new faces.

Two things come to my mind with this sudden growth spurt for the Idaho Chapter. First, I think it is great to see so many people interested in emigrant trails and wanting to be involved with IOCTA. I hope that you will become involved with the area committees for your part of the state. It is important to have as many

people involved in the Chapter as possible. Please contact Doug Jenson and Lyle Lambert about becoming active in the Eastern Idaho Committee, or contact me about working with the Central Idaho Committee and the Western Idaho Committee.

The second thing I think of is the long-time members, as I don't want to lose sight of them. We have some incredible people who have been part of IOCTA for many years. They know a tremendous amount about the emigrant trails and the history of Idaho. I hope that these people will share their knowledge with the Chapter by leading tours or giving a presentation sometime. Hopefully, a lot of the support work can be done by the area committees so conducting a tour will be easier than it has been before. Please let me know if you can conduct a tour for the chapter.

We also need your help with operating the Chapter. I have an immediate need to find someone to help plan the fall meeting. In addition, several of our officers and directors have been serving for many years and would like to step down. Please consider serving to help the Chapter. Contact Jim Payne or me to get more information about the work involved. It is not very much but is very important to the continued success of the chapter.

Thanks to all of you for your interest and support. Special thanks to new member Dave Taylor for scanning all of the back issues of the Trail Dust newsletter and volunteering to record volunteer contributions.

I hope to see you at our next outing on July 23.

## Spring Meeting a Huge Success

Carmela Winery in Glenns Ferry hosted the spring IOCTA chapter meeting on Saturday, May 21. A much larger crowd than normal attended a brief business meeting followed by a slide show presentation on the Main Oregon Trail Back Country Byway by Jerry Eichhorst. After lunch, a caravan tour of 13 vehicles and over 25 people followed the byway from Glenns Ferry to Highway 20 north of Mountain Home. Interpretive sign panels were installed along the way. About 15 people continued on the byway to Bonneville Point.



Tour group at Rattlesnake Creek Byway signs.

## Band of Nine Pound ‘em Down along North Alternate Oregon Trail

*By Diane Hecht*

Nine IOCTA members and guests met Saturday, June 25, in Bliss, Idaho, to tour the North Alternate Oregon Trail (NAOT) route at Malad River Gorge and Clover Creek areas. Diary excerpts provided personal witness to the sites and hardships created by the crossing of the Malad River and the arid desert expanse reaching to Clover Creek. The journal

writings told of the toll endured at Clover Creek in the loss of lives, both human and livestock.

The Malad River Gorge was described as the place where the river disappears into a canyon. To see the spot where the river drops from ground level into the canyon is incredible. It is overwhelming to realize people walked across a natural bridge created by basalt boulders while the river churned and foamed below them. A visit to a Kelton Road stage station site raised more questions than it answered.

Typically, we don't think of sagebrush as being lush, but the heavy spring rain created an abundance of new silver-blue growth. Ridges, gullies and hillsides were carpeted in sage as the vista spanned ahead of us. Our Clover Creek hike included placement of NAOT markers. Volunteers took turns pounding in the markers next to the trail and celebrating with a photo opportunity. Conversation along the way ranged from mundane daily chit chat to observations of how challenging months of life on the trail had been, births, sicknesses, deaths, all while moving onward. We couldn't imagine walking the trail barefooted, as many people had done.

Our day ended with the grateful knowledge that we would head home in the comfort of an air-conditioned car, pondering the lives transformed by crossing the western United States along the Oregon Trail.

Note: Diane and Pete Hecht were guests at the NAOT hikes outing. Diane works at Simplot Company and is the daughter of new member Dave Taylor.

**Welcome** to IOCTA's newest members. Please join us in the chapter activities!

Bud Larson  
Cliff Carstens  
David Slyck  
Jon Standley  
Paul & Peggy Grunland  
Sabra White

### **Tracking Volunteer Contributions**

The efforts of volunteers in helping to monitor and mark the emigrant trails across the country is reported to Congress each year. With the cumulative effect of hundreds of volunteers across many states through the local OCTA chapters, an impressive number is able to be reported. This is extremely important, as it helps persuade Congress for trail-related issues and funding.

It is therefore important that we, at the local chapter level, report the hours, miles, and other expenses incurred for IOCTA activities. A form with further instructions is available on the OCTA website at [http://www.octa-trails.org/media/pdf/all\\_octa\\_volunteer\\_form.pdf](http://www.octa-trails.org/media/pdf/all_octa_volunteer_form.pdf). New member Dave Taylor has agreed track this information for the chapter. Please use this form or email information for the hours, miles, and expenses for meetings, outings, etc. to Dave at DTAYLOR466@aol.com. This information can be sent after each activity, or you can send a summary total at the end of the year. At the end of the

year, Dave will send a total report to OCTA headquarters.

Thanks Dave for assisting with this important tracking of volunteer contributions!

### **Possible Remains of a Historic Ferry Found in the Hagerman Valley**

*By Vaughn Kimball, Idaho Power*

In September of 2010, Idaho Power Company archaeologists, in cooperation with the Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument, examined a location within the boundaries of the Monument on the west bank of the Lower Salmon Falls reservoir. This is an area that burned during the Long Butte Fire of August 2010 (Figure 1), and the increased surface visibility presented the opportunity to try to locate the remains of a ferry reported in historical sources. The examined location has been identified by James



Figure 1. Overview of the location of the historic ferry.

Huntley (1979) as that of a ferry built by fur trappers in 1852-1853 to service Oregon Trail traffic. It is not clear why Huntley believed the specific location to be that of the “trapper ferry,” but a historic ferry is known to have operated

there as indicated on a map from an early United States Geological Survey publication (Marshall 1914). The map also shows a structure in the same location, presumably associated with the ferry operation. Prior to the reconnaissance conducted by Idaho Power last September, no archaeological remains had been identified in the posited ferry location.



Figure 2. Alignment of stones that may constitute a mostly buried portion of a rock foundation.

Idaho Power Company archaeologists identified a rock alignment (Figure 2), the remains of a dugout (Figure 3), and several historic artifacts including a fragment of iron stove, parts of a kerosene lantern, a barrel hoop, and a piece of historic ceramic. It is difficult to assess the nature of the rock alignment as it appears to be mostly buried, but it could be part of a stone foundation and may represent the structure indicated in the USGS publication. A trace of road or

trail leading to the water's edge was also identified. It is unclear whether the trace was created by original ferry traffic or later recreational use of the area prior to its having become a national monument. It is also difficult, given the limited information currently available, to ascertain whether the site is indeed associated with the trapper ferry of the 1850s, a later ferry, or some other historic phenomenon such as placer mining. Nevertheless, the discovery of these remains is an exciting development, as the location and condition of the site suggest the possibility for future archaeological research that may shed additional light on Oregon Trail history in the Hagerman Valley.



Figure 3. Dug-out structure possibly associated with the historic ferry.

#### References Cited:

Huntley, James L. (1979) *Ferry Boats in Idaho*. The Caxton Printers Ltd. Caldwell, Idaho.

Marshall, R.B., compiler (1914) *Profile Surveys in Snake River Basin, Idaho*. Water-Supply Paper 347. United States Geological Survey. Washington D.C.



## **An Update on Energy Development in Idaho**

The wheels of government move slowly, especially when very large projects are proposed that cross land in multiple states with a multitude of property owners and concerned citizens and important resources are present. This is the case with the three large transmission line projects being planned for southern Idaho.

The **Gateway West Transmission Line** will be routed from Glenrock, Wyoming, to the Hemingway Substation near Murphy, Idaho. The line will be approximately 1,100 miles long. Along with the line itself, thousands of miles of access road will need to be improved or constructed to provide access for construction and maintenance. The forthcoming Draft Environmental Impact Statement will not present a preferred alternative, so the alternative that crosses south of City of Rocks and over Granite Pass is still a possibility.

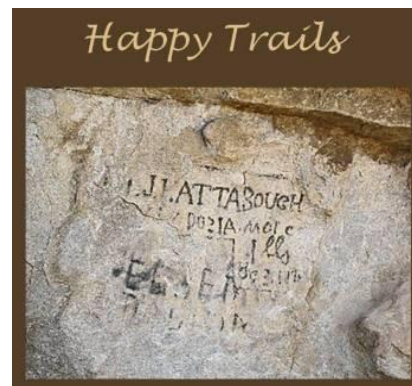
The **Mountain States Transmission Intertie** project proposes construction of a 400 mile-long line from the area of Butte, Montana, following I-15 south onto the Snake River Plain and will terminate at the Midpoint Substation near Shoshone, Idaho. It may have visual effects on four National Historic Landmarks in Montana, including Butte and the historic mining town of Bannock. It may also diminish the view shed of important segments and landscape of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail in the Beaverhead Rock and Dillon area. In Idaho, sections of Goodale's Cutoff may be affected, but it is too early to know.

The **Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Line** is proposed to run 300 miles from Boardman, Oregon, to the Hemingway Substation near Murphy, Idaho. Most of the line will be in Oregon. OCTA members, citizens, and agencies have expressed concerns about effects on segments of the Oregon Trail in Oregon and the South Alternate Oregon Trail in Idaho.



Some visual effect assessments have been conducted for the first two lines, so visual effects on historic trails can be considered at some level selecting a preferred alternative. Archaeological survey is being conducted on all three lines, but the results have not been reported.

OCTA members and the National Trails System Office of the National Park Service continue to play important roles in the review of these projects.



# Diaries Across Idaho

## Malad River Natural Bridge

By Jerry Eichhorst

Crossing Malad River was a challenge for many travelers on the North Alternate Oregon Trail. A swift current and lots of rocks created imposing obstacles. Some used a narrow natural bridge over the south channel of the river to get to an island. A wagon bed bridge was often employed to cross the north channel. Wagons were driven across at a ford ¼ mile upstream.

*Saturday, July 23rd -- We took a fresh start this morning with everything in order, for a good day's drive. Travel about 5 miles and here we are, up a stump again, with a worse place than ever we had before us to be crossed, called Bridge Creek. I presume it takes its name from a natural bridge which crosses it. This bridge is only wide enough to admit one person at a time. A frightful place, with the water roaring and tumbling ten or fifteen feet below it. This bridge is composed of rocks, and all around us, it is nothing but a solid mass of rocks, with the water ripping and tearing over them. Here we have to unload all the wagons and pack everything across by hand, and then we are only on an island. There is a worse place to cross yet, a branch of the same. Have to stay on the island all night, and wait our turn to cross. There are a good many camped on the island, and there are camps on each side of it. There is no chance to pitch a tent, and this island is a solid rock, so we must sleep the best way we can, with the water roaring on each side of us. The empty wagons, cattle, and horses have to be taken further up the river and crossed by means of chains and ropes. The way we cross this branch is to climb down about 6 feet on rocks, and then a wagon bed bottom will just reach across, from rocks to rocks. It must then be fastened at each end with ropes and chains, so that you can cross on it, and then we climb up the rocks*

*on the other side, and in this way everything has to be taken across. Some take their wagons to pieces and take them over in that way.*

*Sunday, July 24th -- Crossed the river this morning and got loaded up...*

Amelia Stewart Knight, 1853



Rock natural bridge on Malad River

*[August] 12th Friday Crossed the two Rocky creeks The ladies went below where a natural bridge crosses the south creek. The banks of the stream are perpendicular [unreadable] I should think water comes down in a waterfall just above the bridge and then foams & dashes over under & between huge rocks making a grand sight. The water is nearly 20 ft. deep I should judge Just below the bridge the other stream comes in. We went a short distance & crossed by the assistance of Mr. Long who was with us...*

Celinda E. Hines, 1853

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