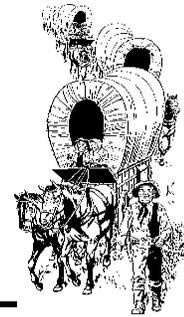


Trail Dust

Newsletter of the Oregon-California Trails Association, Idaho Chapter
Vol. XXVI Issue 2 *Suzi Pengilly, Editor* April 2014



Calendar of Events

May

May 3, Saturday, Spring Meetings, Pocatello

Perkins Restaurant, 1600 Pocatello Creek Road

- Convention Planning Meeting, 9:45 am
- Spring Chapter Meeting, 10:45 am
- Lunch, 11:45 am
- Tour of OT sites west of Pocatello, 1:00 pm

Other activities being considered

- August 2 - Tour of Oregon Trail from Vale to Farewell Bend
- Tours of trail segments in the Fort Hall area
- Marking outing in burned areas north of Mountain Home

Idaho to Host 2016 Convention

Mark your calendars for August 1-5, 2016! A proposal by the Idaho chapter to host the 2016 national OCTA convention in Fort Hall was approved by the OCTA Board of Directors at their national meeting in March of this year. Doug Jenson represented the Idaho chapter at the spring Board of Directors meeting. According to Doug, the convention proposal was well-received and approved unanimously.

The Idaho chapter began discussing the idea of hosting a convention two years ago. The chapter's fall 2012 meeting was held at the new Fort Hall hotel to review the facilities. Last July in Clackamas at the national convention, the conversation accelerated when Idaho attendees agreed the chapter should host the convention. Jerry Eichhorst then prepared a convention proposal which was reviewed at the fall chapter meeting and approved by the chapter. With minor adjustments after the meeting, the proposal was submitted to the OCTA Board in January 2014.

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The convention theme will be "Fort Hall: Cultures and Changes." Its focus will be Native American history in the area and the lasting cultural changes from the 19th-century influx of fur trappers and Oregon and California Trail emigrants. Active participation by the Fort Hall Shoshone-Bannock Indians will be a key component of the convention. It is hoped that the keynote address will be presented by a tribal leader. Other tribal speakers are planned as well.

The fur trade post of Fort Hall was a central point in the early history of Idaho and EuroAmerican emigration on the Oregon and California Trails. Numerous historic sites remain in the area presenting opportunities for interesting bus tours during the convention. Pre- and post-convention tours will be planned to explore areas not accessible to buses.

Completed in 2012, the beautiful *Shoshone Bannock Hotel and Events Center* will house the convention. With modern convention facilities and 162 hotel rooms, the location should be great. Additional hotels and restaurants are available 10 miles south in Pocatello.



Jerry Eichhorst and Jim Hardee are convention co-chairs. Hosting requires much planning and work. We will need a great deal of cooperation and the effort of many people to be successful. With outstanding history, facilities, and the people involved, our intent is to make this one of the best OCTA conventions ever.

Additional information about the convention may be found on the Idaho chapter website, www.IdahoOCTA.org, as it becomes available. Your assistance will be greatly appreciated—and worthwhile!

Message from the IOCTA President

By Jerry Eichhorst

The Idaho chapter will be hosting the 2016 national OCTA convention at Fort Hall. This has the potential to be an incredible convention. There is so much history in the area, the facility is beautiful, and we have a great group of people who have committed to helping. I appreciate all of your help and encourage everyone to become involved. Although planning a convention can be a lot of work, it can also be very rewarding as you develop new friendships and learn so much about an area. I submitted a proposal to national OCTA to have the national organization perform much more of the convention planning process. It was surprisingly well-received and will be interesting to see what happens. In the meantime, it means I am on another committee, this one to review and revise convention planning.

As the weather finally begins to warm, I start thinking about trail outings for the year. We will be viewing several of the trail sites west of Pocatello after the spring meeting in Pocatello on May 3. Bill Wilson and I have been working on an outing to travel from the old Fort Boise site near Parma to Vale, Oregon, and on to Farewell Bend. It is an area I have not yet seen and should be an interesting tour.

We also need to mark the trail and make preparations for people driving to the 2016 convention as they will want to be able to see the trails. Consequently, we should have several outings this year and next to mark the Oregon Trail from the Wyoming border to Chesterfield and from Pocatello west. All of these outings will also help with the planning of convention bus tours in the area. Please let me know other ideas for outings.

I conducted two Community Education classes in March. They were well-attended with 12-14 people in each class. A tour of the Byway from Mountain Home to Boise was also enjoyed by a number of people. I am speaking to a Catholic woman's group on May 4 about the Byway.

It is these types of opportunities to share trail history and sites in the Boise area with new people that I believe generate new, active members in the chapter. If you have such opportunities in your area, please talk with me about what you can do as well. One-on-one or small group contact seems to stir people's interest in historic trails best.

Please watch the chapter website, www.IdahoOCTA.org, calendar page for upcoming activities. Details of activities will be posted to the website when they are established.

BLM Oregon Trail

Outing

By Jerry Eichhorst

On April 3, I had the opportunity to spend the day with 10 BLM people on the Oregon Trail east of Boise. Terry Heslin of the BLM arranged for the outing to

Welcome to IOCTA's newest members:

Gary Makey, Idaho Falls
Susan Buchel, Garden City
David Stearns, Boise
Katherine Kirk, Boise
Anita Fickle, Mountain Home

help acquaint many of these key employees with the trail resources available close to Boise. I was fortunate to join them.

Starting near Hot Springs Creek east of Mountain Home, we traveled west on the Main Oregon Trail Back Country Byway following the Oregon Trail. With a focus on trail damage and preservation opportunities, we stopped along Hot Creek Reservoir to see pristine ruts and at the Teapot Dome Hot Springs site to view trail damage due to off-road vehicles.



The group along Hot Springs Creek viewing pristine trail ruts.

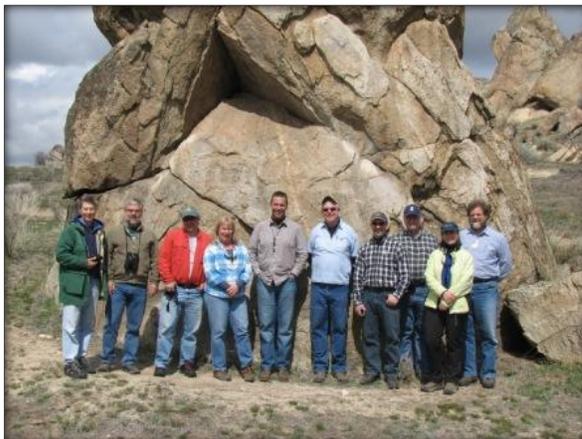
Lunch was held at the Canyon Creek stage station where Stan Norstebon and his family welcomed the group. Stan and his daughter Anita shared their binders of station history with the group during a discussion about efforts to preserve the station. Afternoon stops included

Inscription Rock on Ditto Creek, another inscription rock on Bowns Creek, Mayfield, and Ada County's Oregon Trail trailhead.



Group climbing Jeffrey-Goodale Cutoff near junction with Oregon Trail

The day was filled with good conversations and befriending BLM staff new to me. I truly appreciate the cooperation and support that the Idaho chapter and I personally receive from the local BLM people. We have a great relationship, and I look forward to many years of working together to preserve and enjoy emigrant trails in Idaho.



BLM group at Ditto Creek Inscription Rock

Spring Byway Tour

By Jerry Eichhorst

In what has become an annual event, I led a spring tour of the Main Oregon Trail Back Country Byway. Offered as part of the Boise Schools Community Education

adult education program, we toured the byway from Hot Springs Creek east of Mountain Home to Mayfield.

Joined by 14 people who were unfamiliar with the Oregon Trail and stories of the area, I had a captive audience for the day. With enough wind to blow dust--and small children--away, we visited pristine ruts, the hot springs site, Canyon Creek stage station, Ditto Creek inscription rock, and Mayfield. Sharing diary stories makes the trail come alive 160 years after its heavy use. Several of the group expressed an interest in coming on more outings and joining OCTA.



Group walking on Jeffrey-Goodale Cutoff near Ditto Creek inscription rock and the junction with the Oregon Trail

If you have an interest to learn more about emigrant diaries, walk in the footsteps of the Oregon Trail pioneers, and see the route much as they did on their journey, join me next spring for the Community Education classes and the Byway tour.

SOS: Save Our Station, Canyon Creek Stage Station Preservation Efforts

By Jerry Eichhorst

Located in a beautiful valley on a small stream about 10 miles north of Mountain Home, Idaho, Canyon Creek was a popular camping location on the Oregon Trail. A stage station was built about 1874 to serve the Overland Road stage and freight traffic from Kelton, Utah, to Boise and area mines.

Built of stone and mortar augmented with deer hair, the structure survived quite well until a fire destroyed the roof. Although many walls are still in good shape, others are leaning or have completely failed. The structure is at a critical point if it is to be preserved.



Historical photographs of Canyon Creek station



The station is a unique historic site due to its age, association with the Trail, and easy access for the public. Its significance is recognized in the National Park Service's Oregon Trail National Historic Trail Comprehensive Management Plan:

Canyon Creek Station was another stage station used during the later years of the Oregon Trail. The station was located where the trail crossed Canyon Creek. The availability of water and grass made the creek bottoms a favorite camping spot for emigrants. The station was a private residence until the 1970s, when a fire gutted the structure. The rock walls are all that remain.

Stan Norstebon and his family own the station site and the small valley oasis. They have been extremely supportive of IOCTA for many years, hosting bus tours and regular visits to the station. Stan received the OCTA Friends of the Trail award in 2013.



Recently the family has been searching for a means to repair the station or transfer ownership to an organization with the capacity to make the repairs and maintain it going forward. I have worked with them for many years in this endeavor. Unfortunately, our efforts appeared to reach dead ends; local and state governments we approached do not have the funding to take on such a project.

Within the last couple of years, however, Katherine Kirk, Director of the Idaho Heritage Trust (IHT), has become involved in the effort. IHT's mission is to preserve non-profit or publicly owned historic buildings and sites within Idaho. Katherine's great interest in preserving the station has been a blessing to the process. In addition, Katherine is a new IOCTA member. With trained historical architects and masons available, IHT can provide the expertise needed for such a project.

Terry Heslin, IOCTA member and Outdoor Recreation Planner with the BLM in Boise, also shares an interest in preserving the station. We have discussed preservation prospects many times.

In early April, Terry arranged for me to lead a number of BLM people on a tour of the Main Oregon Trail Back Country Byway. We stopped at the station and talked with the Norstebons for some time about preservation options involving the BLM. Many of the BLM staff had never been to the site and were very interested in the preservation effort.

On Monday, April 21, members of the Norstebon family, BLM, Idaho Heritage Trust, and IOCTA met at Canyon Creek to discuss site preservation. We had a very productive meeting discussing opportunities and next steps.



In just a few weeks this spring, the preservation effort has gone from a dead-ended dream to a promising reality. As a result of the ongoing work by many people, several major initiatives are underway:

1. The BLM is very interested in receiving the donated stage station site.
2. Work is commencing to accomplish the transfer of ownership to the BLM by the end of the year.
3. A preservation plan with cost estimates for various levels of preservation will be developed in the next few months by Fred Walters, a noted historical architect who has been involved in many preservation projects throughout Idaho and the West.
4. IHT and IOCTA have pledged money to the project so stabilization efforts can be started this summer.

A great deal of work and money will still be needed to restore the stage station. One suggestion is to provide funding through the creation of a "Friends" organization. We welcome other ideas IOCTA members may have for fundraising. IHT has a 50/50 matching grants program and hopes to be able to match the funds which are raised.

Although it will take a number of years to complete the preservation work, I am happy that IOCTA is involved in the project. I believe this will be a great endeavor.

Please let me know if you are interested in helping with preserving the Canyon Creek stage station.

Diaries Across Idaho

Boise River Valley Rabbits

By Jerry Eichhorst

The trees, grasses and clear waters of the Boise River were a welcome site for Oregon Trail travelers. Although game was scarce along most of the trail, rabbits abounded in the Boise Valley and were a welcome treat to those who could get them.

August 6.— ... Black-eared rabbits and prairie chickens are very numerous about here. We succeeded in getting some of them.

August 7.—This morning we started early; our course was down the valley. At the end of five miles we came to good grass on the river bank. Here we lay till 5 o'clock in the afternoon, when we gathered up and moved down four miles farther. Today our boys succeeded in killing a number of rabbits, prairie hens and quail, which abound here in great quantities, and to us are a great luxury at this time.

P. V. Crawford, 1851

Sunday, August, 29 - Travel 12 miles - down Salmon river [Boise River] - good grass all the time camp at 2 o'clock good grass - wood and water hares plenty - got some fish of the indians.

James Akin, Jr., 1852

Sunday September 12 Laid over to day The country is filled with large long eared rabbits- ears tipped with black. They taste good.

William Valentine Spencer, 1852

Mon. 13. Moved down the river. Saw many hares. Some Indians. Swaped for a fine trout which (I suppose) would weigh 8 or 10 lbs. Got some hares.

John Spencer, 1852 (father of William Valentine Spencer)

Thursday, Sept. 16. ...Saw the most rabbits today that I ever saw in the same length of time. Frank shot 18 in about an hour. Tonight we have plenty of good, green grass for our cattle. Indians bring fish and rabbits. Made 15 miles.

Parthenia Blank, 1852

Wedn August 2. ...the men that were on hunt of stolen horses pass us this eve with all their horses. found the indians on them running down rabbits. one would not give up the horse without a shirt, and they gave him one. have travel'd about 15 miles to day and camp't again on Boise

Sarah Sutton, 1854

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