

Spring Issue

2020



CALIFORNIA TRAIL HERITAGE ALLIANCE

The Wagon Tongue

“Subsistence in the Great Basin”

It's early spring and as the immigrants began preparing for their journey to California, the native people in the Great Basin were just beginning their annual cycle of gathering their foods in order to survive in this harsh environment.

In the 1930's, known anthropologist, Julian H. Steward, traveled into the Great Basin and his research had several objectives. His first objective was to make an ethnographic reconnaissance of the Western Shoshoni and some of their Northern Paiute, Ute, and Southern Paiute neighbors. These tribes are the major native tribes of the Great Basin. Most of the Shoshoni had not, to his knowledge, been previously studied and many had not even been visited by an ethnologist. He wrote in his 1938 manuscript, *"Basin-Plateau Aboriginal Sociopolitical Groups"*, a very simple explanation of their seasonal subsistence activities. He noted:

"In a very rough way, these activities divided the year into four periods. In early spring, when stored foods were running low, people eagerly awaited the first growth of new plants to stave off starvation. The first edible plants were those whose stems or leaves were cooked or eaten raw as "greens." They occurred along streams, near lakes and in low hills, where snow had first disappeared and warmth had come earliest.

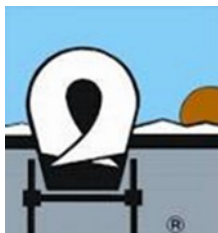
By early summer, seeds of herbaceous and other plants had begun to ripen, some in the desert valleys, but most in the moist hills. These required that people leave their winter villages, if they had not already done so, and trek sometimes considerable distances. In a moist year a number of families might go into valleys to favored localities, but, as water had to be carried in ollas, their stay was limited to a few days or a couple of weeks at the most. When other seeds began to ripen in the mountains they moved back into the hills. Sometimes, if information reached them that certain species were abundant in another range, the entire family crossed one or more valleys, traveling 30 or 40 miles to procure the harvest. They preferred, however, to remain near their winter village so that any cached seeds would be within a convenient distance of it. The harvest period in any locality was delimited because the seeds of most species fell off the plants within a few days or weeks after ripening.

Later in the summer edible roots began to mature. These could be dug at leisure provided the stems did not wither beyond recognition. With a few berries, they provided foods during late summer. If roots were not available, however, stored seeds had to last the summer out.

By early fall pine nuts began to ripen. But the crops were extremely erratic. Some years there are virtually none in the entire area; in other years they are abundant in some places but not in others. As a good crop provided far more than could be harvested there was no competition for pine-nut lands except in the west where some idea of group rights to food areas generally prevailed. Families went in the fall to the nearest locality which offered an abundant crop. They usually stored the nuts in the mountains and wintered nearby. If the crop had failed, however, winter fare was extremely poor. And if, in addition, a drought had restricted other crops, winter usually brought great suffering, starvation, and even cannibalism.

Gathering, therefore, entailed erratic movements of the Indians. Individual families wandered from spring to fall as the promise of foods was greater in one locality or another. Though members of a winter village tended to go to the same localities, they often separated when foods were too scarce or foregathered, perhaps with people from other villages, at places of plenty. If foods near home were abundant they cached them in accessible locations in the mountains and returned home for winter. But often winter found them in distant ranges, associated with people from various localities. "

He later notes that "...Game was less important than plant foods in Shoshonean subsistence... (continued on pg. 3)



38th Annual Oregon-California Trail Convention, Elko, NV -
September 19-23, 2020



***“Through the Lens of History –
Preserving the Past – Focusing on the Future”***

KEY DATES

Friday – September 18, 2020	<u>Pre-Convention Tours and Day Hike</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Lamoille Canyon- “California Trail Highlights” (Day 1)- Day Hike of the Greenhorn Cutoff
Saturday – September 19, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- OCTA National Board Meeting- Trail Days and- “California Trail Highlights” (Day 2)- Welcome Reception at the California Trail Center
Sunday – September 20, 2020	<u>Bus Tours</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Fort Ruby and Ruby Valley- Long Canyon Mine Project- Gravelly Ford <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Wells/Osino and Williams Family Gun Museum <u>Private Vehicle Tour</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- “The Humboldt is North of Us...So Let’s Go South”
Monday – September 21, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Opening Session- Speakers- Awards Dinner at the Elko Convention Center
Tuesday – September 22, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Repeat of Sunday tours- Reception at Great Basin College Library
Wednesday – September 23, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Speakers- Activity Stations- Period Clothing Contest- End of Trail Dinner at the Elko Convention Center
Thursday, September 24, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- MET Mapping Workshop

Confirmed bus tours include:

Bus tours to Lamoille Canyon, Wells/Osino and Williams Family Gun Museum, Blacksmith shop and Gunsmith shop, Fort Ruby and Ruby Valley, Long Canyon and Gravelly Ford

Private vehicle tours

- “The Humboldt River is north of us...so let’s go south” – led by Roger Gash
- “California Trail Highlights – City of Rocks to Goose Creek” – led by Jerry Eichhorst and Paul Dinwiddie (2 day tour)

Make Your Room Reservations Now for the Best Value!

- High Desert Inn - \$69 - 775.738.8425
- Gold Country Inn - \$79 - 775.738.8421
- Red Lion Hotel & Casino - \$89 - 775.738. 2111

**NAME OF BLOCK -
OCTA Oregon California Trail
Convention 2020**

NEW ATTRACTIONS & ACTIVITIES SINCE THE 2010 CONVENTION

Fort Ruby, Ruby Valley, Nevada



In Ruby Valley, just east of Overland Pass, are the remains of Fort Ruby. The Fort (1862-1869) was built by the U.S. Army in the "wilderness of eastern Nevada." to protect the overland mail coaches, Pony Express and emigrant trail. Excavated jointly by the U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service after 2002, the site now boasts about ½ mile of interpretive trail with eleven interpretive panels and a reconstructed spring house.

The Williams Family Gun Museum, Blacksmith Shop and Gunsmith Shop

More than 1200 firearms – many that were guns that were used to settle the American West – make up the extraordinary collection of Jeff Williams and his family. The museum boasts examples of almost every type of fire arm from the Revolutionary War to the present. There are many other historical artifacts in the museum in addition to the amazing array of weapons. Immediately adjacent to the gun museum, Jeff has constructed a period-correct 19th century blacksmith shop, with an antique trip hammer, and gunsmith shop.



California Trail Days at the California Trail Interpretive Center



During Trail Days on Saturday September 19, 2020, you can refresh your recollections or learn the stories of the pioneers who endured the 2,000-mile trek to California.

Between 1841 and 1869 over 250,000 people sold their belongings, packed up wagons and set out over-land for California. Some were seeking land. Others were searching for gold. Still others sought adventure. Some went for reasons we may never know.

Enjoy Native American programs, visit with fur trappers and watch black powder demonstrations. Our young visitors will enjoy Jr. Ranger activities throughout the camp. California Trail Days is a pioneer reenactment event for the whole family.



Lamoille Canyon



Learn about the natural history, geology, and tips on photography in the beautiful Ruby Mountains located southeast of Elko, NV. Regionally known photographer and geologist Susan Elliott and naturalist Larry Hyslop will lead a never-to-be-forgotten bus tour of the Canyon with stops for a short nature walk and photography. The glaciated and geologically varied "Rubies" are a true treasure in Northern Nevada's desert environment.

Subsistence in the Great Basin (cont. from pg. 1)

"...The general aridity of the region restricted the numbers of all species of large game and the limited grasslands largely precluded species which occur in great herds ... Small game was of relatively great importance. Reptiles, rodents, fish, and insects all supplied foods. Rodents and other small mammals had several advantages over large game. They remained in restricted localities and did not require a long chase."

The Smithsonian's Vol. 11, the Great Basin People, goes on to state:

"...it is clear that many species were important in native perception beyond the practical aspects of producing foods, medicines, and items for manufacture...Plants and animals have also entered into many phases of the world views of Great Basin peoples, and probably to a much greater degree than has been documented. Plants and animals are subjects of myths and tales and are part of ceremony throughout the region. They are also important foci for present-day activities, including ceremonies and subsistence uses."

Below, is a seasonal chart of the major types of gathering and hunting species of most Great Basin tribes with the exception of

bison, salmon and camas which are mostly found in the northern areas.

April	May	June	July	August	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March
Early greens, water cress, sprouts	Camas			Choke-cherry & other berries							
	Seeds, pods, bitter root, wild carrot				Pinion nuts, sun-flower & other seeds						Ground hogs
Deer, elk, moose, fish					Trout, perch		Deer, elk, moose, fish				
Ducks, geese, groundhogs, squirrels				Bighorn sheep, ducks, geese					Rabbits	Ducks, geese	
Bison		Salmon				Bison					Bison



UPCOMING EVENTS

CTHA Board Meetings

*At this time California Trail Center Foundation Board meetings will be held by computer/phone conference until further notice and will begin at 5:30 p.m.

May 14, 2020 CTHA Board Mtg.
June 11, 2020 CTHA Board Mtg.
June 13-14, 2020—California Trail Days
Sept. 19-23, 2020—OCTA Convention

KEY LINKS

www.facebook.com/pages/California-Trail-Center-Foundation/157116030992463

<http://www.californiatrailcenter.org/>

www.emigranttrailswest.org

www.octa-trails.org

www.appl.org

[www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/elko_field_office/
blm_programs/blm_special_areas/](http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/elko_field_office/blm_programs/blm_special_areas/)

The California Trail Interpretative Center's website message regarding their closure:

"To ensure the safety of our staff and visitors during the Covid-19 outbreak the California Trail Center will be closed temporarily. All events will be cancelled until further notice. We apologize for any inconvenience."

Core Members:

Tamara Baker
Bailey Billington-Benson
Leah Brady
Marlene Goddard
Walt Goddard
Helen Hankins
Duane Jones
Kevin Lee

CTHA Board of Directors

At-Large Members

Chuck Briggs
Lisa Dinwiddie
Paul Dinwiddie
Grafton Miller

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Greg Feathers

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Larry Schmidt
Frank Tortorich
John Winner



2019 California Trail Days Pictures

At this time, the plans are still in the works for the 2020 California Trail Days and Gina Mele is the Acting Supervisory Park Ranger. Please direct your questions to her for more information - they'll share what they know as they can.

Here are some of the 2019 California Trail Days pictures.





CALIFORNIA TRAIL

HERITAGE ALLIANCE



President's Letter January 2020

Greetings to Friends of the California Trail Heritage Alliance:

During these days of sheltering at home and self-isolation, many things are still going on in the trail world that give us something to look forward to. Below is an update about these activities and plans.

BLM Update – Connie Jacobs, who was the Manager of the California Trail Interpretive Center until recently, has accepted a staff position with the BLM in the Colorado State Office in Lakewood. In early April, the acting BLM District Manager Robbie McAboy reached out to Helen Hankins and expressed an interest in maintaining the positive relationship between the agency and the Alliance. Since interaction with the BLM has been intermittent since Greg Feathers' departure, this was very positive news. Robbie will be included on future emails related to the Trail Center and the Alliance.

Long Canyon and Gravelly Ford Update – Steve Grosz with Nevada Gold Mines contacted Helen Hankins recently and stated that the company is supportive of OCTA doing trail mapping on private lands owned by them and also that they were interested in pursuing a conservation easement at Gravelly Ford. This was a very positive contact and will enable us to move forward on mapping the Hastings Cutoff in northeastern NV as well as the California Trail in the vicinity of Gravelly Ford.

On another note, NV Gold Mines is pursuing additional water rights acquisitions in the Long Canyon area for the purpose of facilitating mining at greater depth.

(cont. on pg. 7)

Elko OCTA 2020 Convention

Some members of the OCTA 2020 planning team have been in discussion with OCTA President Lee Black and Association Manager Travis Boley about the feasibility of holding the 2020 Convention.

Contracts with the Red Lion and with the ECVA have been reviewed. In order to avoid penalties, the contract with the Elko Convention Center must be cancelled by June 24.

At present, plans are moving forward to hold the convention. This means that we are continuing to work on the registration package, work on key grants, and fine tune the convention budget and other activities. Some other options are being considered but have not been fully developed by OCTA leadership. More information will be available by mid to late May.





President's Letter January 2020

(Continued from pg. 6)

Idaho OCTA Update - The Idaho chapter has canceled all activities through June 1. These include the following: annual Oregon Main Oregon byway tour on April 18th, the May 7-8 City of Rocks outings, the Spring Chapter meeting on May. IOCTA will be reassessing summer activities over the next few weeks/months.

Grants and Elko County Recreation Board - Funding needs to address public health needs related to the corona virus have impacted TravelNevada grants. No funds will be made available for infrastructure projects this year. The application process for marking grants, originally due May 1, has been suspended at least until fall. At this time it is uncertain whether any funds will be available from the Elko County Recreation Board after July 1. Information will shortly be forthcoming from McMullen-McPhee. Duane Jones, in conjunction with Marlene Goddard, will review our current financial status so we know exactly how much money is unrestricted and uncommitted at this time.

MET Mapping - Kevin Lee submitted the year-end report to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service with the results of 2019 Mapping Emigrant Trails (MET) work in the Ruby Valley. In 2020, possible MET Mapping locations will include Ruby Valley and private land owned by Nevada Gold Mines. Details will be provided when available. The Alliance will evaluate potential purchase of lydar or photogrammetric imagery to support work on NV Gold Mine property. The OCTA MET Mapping committee and the National Park Service have cancelled the proposed June MET Mapping workshop in Salt Lake City. However, they may take advantage of the still-scheduled OCTA convention in September and have a workshop immediately after the convention in Elko.

Hot Hole Interpretive Panel - Kevin Lee provided diary quotes and some imagery to the National Park Service some months ago. In recent conversations, the NPS interpreter indicated that a draft of at least the panel text is being reviewed by his supervisor. It will be provided to Kevin after that review. (Kevin is not sure if the draft includes images as well as text.) Although the TravelNevada infrastructure grant will not be forthcoming this year, the Alliance will seek to cover the cost of the interpretive panel at the Elko Hot Hole.

Western Emigrant Trail Collection - Due to some confusion at the March CTHA meeting, clarification is provided here about the Western Emigrant Trail Collection. The 40-year collection of the Overland Journal and issues of News from the Plains donated to the California Trail Interpretive Center by Frank Tortorich has still housed at the Trail Center. Great Basin College library staff is waiting to work further with the Western Emigrant Trail Collection while UNR changes the way they work with their library and that at "branch" institutions. Eric Walsh, GBC librarian, did mention that the collection gets little use. He attributes this to a small number of students on campus (about 1200) and an increasing use of the internet for research. The possibility of setting up a lap top/work station at the Trail Center with fifty or more diaries loaded on it or on a thumb drive was discussed. Further discussions need to occur with the BLM.

See you on the trail,

- Helen Hankins, President



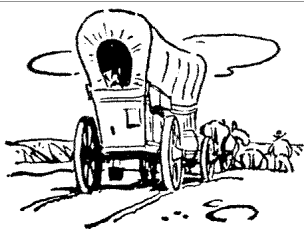


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All members receive the informative electronic newsletter, electronic updates about special events and activities and a 10% discount at the California Trail Interpretive Center store. Invitations to one or more special events are extended to the Supporter membership levels & above.

Level	Individual	Family	Supporter	Partner	Lifetime
Special Events)			1	2	3
Cost	\$25	\$50	\$75	\$100	\$200

*Special Events may include presentations, workshops, tours, exhibit previews or other activities. Individuals who choose to make a donation equal to or greater than \$250 will receive recognition, if desired, on the Donor Wall in the California Trail Interpretive Center

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