

Winter Issue

2020



CALIFORNIA TRAIL HERITAGE ALLIANCE

The Wagon Tongue



“Character of the Great Basin”

Yes, character is what it has. The Great Basin has much diversity. From snow-capped mountains to arid plains, mountain lakes and springs to barren plains.

In 1849, William Kelly and his light style of writing wrote about the Great Basin in his diary. His descriptions showed the diversity that he saw. The Great Basin...

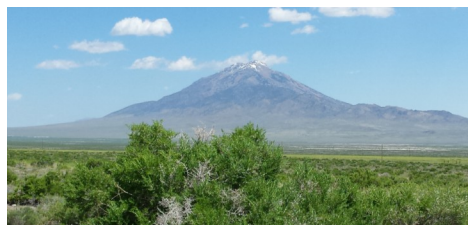
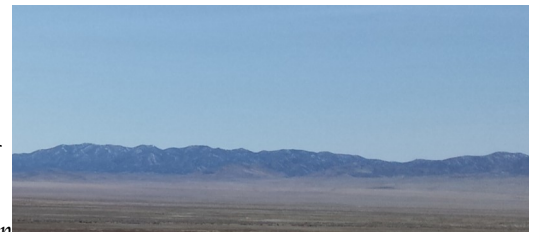
“is that of desert, but with great exceptions... Mountain is the predominating structure of the interior of the basin, with plains between the mountains wooded and watered, the plains arid and sterile, the interior mountains conforming to the law which governs the course of the Rocky Mountains and the Sierra Nevada, ranging nearly north and south, and present a very uniform character of abruptness, rising suddenly from a very narrow base of ten or twenty miles, and attaining an elevation of two to five thousand feet above the level of the country on which they stand.



They are grassy and wooded, showing snow on their summit peaks during the greater part of the year, and affording small streams of water, from five to fifty feet wide, which lose themselves, some in lakes, some in dry plains, and some in belts of alluvial soil at their

base—for these mountains have very uniformly this belt of alluvion, the wash and abraision of their sides— rich in excellent grasses, fertile and light, and loose enough to absorb small streams.

Between these mountains are the arid plains, which receive and deserve the name of the Desert. The interior of the Great Basin, so far as explored, is found to be a succession of sharp mountain ranges and naked plains, such As have been described. which, in consideration of their grass, water, and wood, and alluvion at their base, may be called fertile in the radical sense of the word, as signifying a capacity to produce or bear, and in contradistinction to sterility. Sterility on the contrary, is the absolute characteristic of the valleys between the



mountains—no wood, no water, no grass—the gloomy artemesia, the prevailing shrub—no animal except the fleet and timid antelope, always on the watch for danger, and finding no place too dry or barren, which gives a wide horizon for its view and a clear field for its flight...



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> - Lamoille Canyon - “California Trail Highlights” (Day 1) - Day Hike of the Greenhorn Cutoff
Saturday – September 19, 2020	- 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> - Fort Ruby and Ruby Valley - Wells/Osino and Williams Family - Long Canyon Mine Project Gun Museum - Gravelly Ford <u>Private Vehicle Tour</u> - “The Humboldt is North of Us...So Let’s Go South”
Monday – September 21, 2020	- Opening Session - Speakers - Awards Dinner at the Elko Convention Center
Tuesday – September 22, 2020	- Repeat of Sunday tours - Reception at Great Basin College Library
Wednesday – September 23, 2020	- Speakers - Activity Stations - Period Clothing Contest - End of Trail Dinner at the Elko Convention Center
Thursday, September 24, 2020	- 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.



UPCOMING EVENTS

CTHA Board Meetings

*All California Trail Center Foundation Board meetings are held at the California Trail Interpretive Center and begin at 5:30 p.m.

- Feb. 13, 2020 CTHA Board Mtg.
- Mar. 12, 2020 CTHA Board Mtg.
- June 13-14, 2020—California Trail Days

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/

CTIC Notes from Greg (cont. from pg. 5)

10. California Trail History tid-bit

Hungry emigrants ate many new foods while on the Trail. Bison, antelope, trout, coyote, bugs, and prairie dogs have all been mentioned in diaries as food items consumed on the 2000 mile journey. One such delicacy was called “Bush Fish” by several emigrants. Rattlesnakes earned this nickname due to the habitat it was typically found in and its fishy taste.

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
- Jacqueline Lucero
- Larry Schmidt
- Frank Tortorich
- John Winner

Newsletter

- Editor: Leah Brady
- Contributors:
- Helen Hankins
- Greg Feathers



California Trail Interpretative Center Notes by G. Feathers

1. **Alex Rose**—The Trail Center will host a celebration in memory of Alex Rose ,Friday evening on June 12th from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. We are hosting this event the night before Trail Days so all of our extended Trail Center family that join us for Trail Days can attend the event. This will be a sad, yet wonderful time to share food, stories and time together as we remember our Ranger Rose at his best. Please RSVP to me for the celebration of life so we can plan for food and drinks.
2. **Tim Burns**—With the shift to our winter schedule Tim Burns's time as a seasonal interpreter has ended. We greatly appreciate the work he has done to improve our site interpretation and operations. We all wish Tim the best of luck in his future endeavors.
3. **Welcome Steve Owens and Kate Sorom**— The Trail Center has two new staff members on its team. Steve Owens is a retired science teacher and will be working as a seasonal guide through the summer. Kate Sorom will be with us until mid-February on a detail as the acting Supervisory Park Ranger. Kate currently works as a Park Ranger at Sloan Canyon in Las Vegas.
4. **Winter operating schedule has commenced**— With the slower winter season upon us, the Trail Center has shifted its operating schedule. The Center will be open Thursday through Monday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
5. **Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon**— The Volunteer appreciation banquet will be on January 25th at 12:00 p.m. If you have not done so already, please RSVP to me.
6. **Pioneer Christmas**—Pioneer Christmas was a great success. We broke our attendance record for the event by 100 visitors. We appreciate everyone who turned up and helped out with the event. This could not have happened without you.
7. **Trail Center Grounds Upgrades**—Next time you visit the Trail Center, check out the new pathways that have been placed on our grounds. This has been done to make our grounds ADA compliant. A new pathway has been placed between the parking lot and the Shoshone camp, another path has been made to better connect our plaza to the wagon camp, and finally a walkway has been placed across the ravine from the wagon camp to the old Shoshone camp.
8. **Becky is Back!** - We lost Becky for a few weeks during the holidays. Becky is returning this week and will now be working as a Nevada Outdoor School employee. Becky will be the point of contact for Trail Center events under her new role.
9. **My Last Newsletter**—It is with regret and excitement that this is my last contribution to the newsletter. I have accepted a position as a BLM Park Ranger in Kremmling Colorado and will be heading out there on February 1st. It has been my dream for several years to work in an outdoor recreation program and I will have the opportunity to do this in Colorado. This position includes running the whitewater rafting program for a popular section of the Colorado River and managing several campgrounds in northern Colorado. I will serve as the volunteer coordinator for the Kremmling field office as well so if any of you have ever wanted to volunteer in the Colorado Rockies please let me know!

With me on the way out volunteer coordinating duties are being shifted to other staff members. Becky will be in coordinating volunteers for special events like Trail Days. Jordan will be coordinating volunteers for field trips and weekend programs. Steve will be coordinating volunteers for the front desk.

I want to thank all of you for supporting the Trail Center. I will cherish the relationships I have developed with you over the past two years. Living in Elko and working at the Trail Center has been a life changing experience and I definitely plan on returning to Elko from time to time. If I survive ski season in the Rockies I will try to be in town for either Trail Days or the OCTA Convention. Hopefully we will be able to catch up then. You are always welcome to contact me at any time. My email will still be gfeathers@blm.gov and my personal phone number is 716 -380-8837. If you end up being near Kremmling for any reason don't be afraid to give me a holler. -Greg Feathers



CALIFORNIA TRAIL

HERITAGE ALLIANCE



President's Letter January 2020

What an awesome beginning to our 2020 year! At our board meeting on January 9, nearly every board member was present – including three from Jackson and Placerville CA and Minden NV by phone. Before the meeting began there was a buzz in the room about all the things going on with the Alliance. Some of the highlights are included in this article.

Chuck Briggs and Lisa Dinwiddie will be meeting with Jordan Thomas to evaluate which books still held at the trail Center need to be digitized. They will also explore how a stand-alone work station allowing public access to digitized journals and diaries might be established at the Trail Center.

Kevin Lee is working on the final MET Mapping report for the 2019 season; he will be discussing some thoughts on the Central Overland Trail with Jess Petersen/Roger Gash in the near future. He has also placed materials on the National Park Service fttp site that are needed for development of the interpretive sign for the Hot Hole. As an item of interest, Kevin also shared information about the history of barbed wire and provided a handout to all interested parties. (cont. on pg. 7)

Elko OCTA 2020 Convention



Just a short eight months to the OCTA national convention in Elko, NV. The convention planning team is hard at work getting ready for an anticipated 400 attendees at the convention.

Big Picture: Jan Petersen is chairing the tour committee. Quotes have been received from Coach USA for the major bus tours to Fort Ruby and Ruby Valley, to Wells/Osino and the Williams Family Gun Museum, and to Long Canyon. Nevada Gold Mines is working on 4WD transportation to Gravelly Ford. Hotels are identified and taking room reservations. The venues of the Elko Convention Center and the California Trail Center are “in the bag”. Initial approval for receptions at the Trail Center and at Great Basin College library have been received. Nevada Gold Mines has given permission for bus tours on private property at Long Canyon and Gravelly Ford.

Speakers: About 75% of the invited speakers have committed to participate. The diverse speakers and panel discussions will present a broad range of topics from varying perspectives.

Food and Entertainment: Duane Jones has been hard at work organizing and making contacts with local restaurants and vendors. The Awards banquet on Monday night will be Basque Cuisine with Basque Dancers. The End of Trail Dinner will be western cuisine with harmonica and spoons entertainment. For lunches, box lunches snacks and coffee breaks, Duane is working with a variety of businesses throughout the community.

Trail Days will be hosted by the BLM at the California Trail Interpretive Center under the leadership of Manager Connie Jacobs. Demonstrations, re-enactors, and indoor and outdoor exhibits will be featured. The Day will culminate in a reception with music provided by Southwind.



(President's message cont.)

Walt Goddard has proposed interpretive signs along the California Trail to the Elko City Council. They have asked that CTHA provide specific locations. Walt will schedule a "walk-about" in late February for all interested parties to select likely sites for interpretive signs about the trail. Once the sites are selected, additional engineering surveys and other work will be next on the agenda.

The Nevada Outdoor School (with Jackie Lucero's assistance) has agreed to "host" one of the educational trunks in Winnemucca. Rachel Crews, archaeologist with BLM in Carson City will work with OCTA members in Fernley and Reno to find the best "host" for a trunk in that area. Helen Hankins will work with Audrey Elder (OCTA) in Missouri to acquire all that is needed to completely fill two trunks. Helen will also obtain six flash drives so that material including maps and photos can be downloaded and available for any educators who check out the trunks. Currently CTHA has funded one trunk at OCTA headquarters and three at the Trail Center for staff and educator use. At the December board meeting it was decided to add two more trunks in Winnemucca and the Reno/Carson area for the benefit of educators further west along the California national historic trail.

The Alliance is sending a letter to BLM requesting a meeting to discuss mitigation of indirect effects relative to the Long Canyon Mine. Since OCTA and CTHA initial involvement in the project several years ago, there has been significant change in BLM leadership and staff, a change in ownership of the mine, and new players in our organization. Discussions with BLM staff at an informal October meeting raised concerns that the BLM might be reversing its' intentions. A meeting was requested to bring all stakeholders to the table at the same time for an update.

NDOT promised an update on the bike path in an email to Helen Hankins on January 9. We remain optimistic that this project will move forward at some point.

Work on the OCTA 2020 national convention is doing well. Major bus tours, most of the speakers, and the venues and lodging have been determined. With the convention just eight months away, we have arrived at the point where the "devil is in the details". See the article elsewhere in this newsletter about the convention.

Special thanks to Gratton Miller for taking on the job of note taker and to Marlene Goddard for her dedicated work as treasurer and Leah Brady for her work as our Newsletter editor.

- Helen Hankins, President

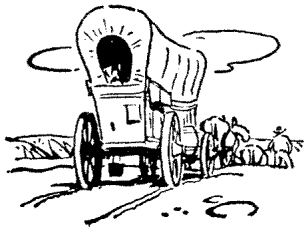


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Join your friends and neighbors and become a supporter of the California Trail Interpretive Center! Every membership supports the California Trail Interpretive Center and Trail preservation. When you join other enthusiasts to become a member, or renew your membership, you directly support interpretation, education, and special events at the California Trail Interpretive Center, and help preserve the Trail and its history for the benefit of current and future generations.

Annual Memberships: New Renewal

Name: _____ Address: _____

City/ST/Zip: _____

Email: _____

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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CONTACT US!

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