



# CROSSROADS

News of the Utah Crossroads Chapter  
Oregon-California Trails Association  
Vol. 28, No. 2, September 2016

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## Boy Scouting and Trails, by Terry Welch

It's the middle of May. The phone rings. The call is from Ohio. A family is going to do a camping trip as they travel to California. They want to spend enough time in Utah to allow a teen-age son to complete the trail service, travel and camping requirements for the trails patch offered by the Boy Scouts of America. Requirements are that they spend so much time on the trail and have trail guide.



Fast-forward to the end of June. They and I meet at an abandoned café in Echo. We traveled up the Canyon to Castle Rock for the first stop. We were no sooner safely parked than all four doors of their vehicle came open. Five people were out and stood in polite anticipation of what stories/history they would hear—this scene repeated itself at all stops. (I never saw any electronic devices.)

With just a little instruction the teen son was working at cleaning the T-Rail marker at the mouth of Heiner Canyon. His attention to detail exceeded my instructions and expectation at various markers and historical panels down to and including the Pony

Express marker in Henifer. A couple of locals stopped to see what they were doing and thanked them.



Express marker in Henifer. At each stop they took time to take pictures make a log of the location, historical significance, work completed and signs needing replacement or repair. The young man also used a black marker to blacken the flaked out letters on the T-rail at Heiner canyon.

From Henifer the family took cleaning supplies and marked maps and headed up over Big Mountain and on to at least Horseshoe Springs.

It was a good experience. We would do well to promote this among neighbors and youth groups (one youth leader has already expressed interest). It seems that there are multiple benefits to promoting such activities. *(The needed form can be found under "forms" on the BSA website.)*

## Fort Hall Convention Wrap-Up - from OCTA HQ



The comments are pouring in, and there seems to be unanimity in the thought that the Fort Hall convention will go down as a great success. Much praise must be passed along to Idaho chapter president Jerry Eichhorst, convention chairman John Briggs, and their rather large team of volunteers. This team included many OCTA members from chapters as far away as Kansas, so kudos to all who pitched in to help build great memories for over 300 people from 26 states.

Please see our Facebook page for some highlights from the convention, and be sure to check the next issue of *News From the Plains* for a complete recap. It does appear OCTA's convention ended just in time, however, as a lightning strike on Saturday torched close to 10,000 acres at Fort Hall.

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### Oscar's Updates

Well, the big news was at Fort Hall, Idaho this past month. The 34th annual OCTA Convention. I attended



for part of three days and it was great to see so many old friends and plans for OCTA's future. There were over 300 attending from 26 states.

I stayed in Pocatello as the Fort Hall Center was full early on. There were 18 Crossroads members there and I was pleased to see Crossroads members receive awards at the evening awards banquet. It was great to see Will Bagley speak (as usual) and I also enjoyed Jim Hardees' talk on Fort Hall's Nathaniel Wyeth as well as Jerry Eichorst's trail sites and the opening talks from members of the Shoshone-Bannock tribe. The facility was splendid I thought.

Awards given to Crossroads members were to Jesse and Nancy Petersen – the Elaine McNabney Award



for trails marking endeavors, Vic Heath for long term service, and the Merrill Mattes Award to Lee Kreutzer, and Dixon Ford for the

Overland Journals article "Oxen Engines of Overland Migration." More photos on page 8.

Our Fall plans are September 9<sup>th</sup> at the Fort Douglas Museum with our usual catered meal from Mier's Catering. Possible speakers from the Grantsville, Utah 20 Wells Chapter of S.U.P. We are hoping for an Arrowhead Chipper from there too, to explain how this worked.

Also, our November chapter meeting at the Salt Lake County north building. More on this later.

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### OCTA - Yearly Student Calendar Project, Vern Gorzitze

The 2017 Calendar judging is over. It has been printed and the winners have been notified as have the teachers and school administrators. The student winner receives a \$50 Check and a Calendar. The winners



will also be recognized at a school assembly at the beginning of the school year. The school also receives a Calendar to be hung in an appropriate location. The Salt Lake area again, had a good showing, with winners attending Canyon Rim Academy and Upland Terrace Elementary School.

My wife, Ilene has been spearheading the program at several schools for more than a decade. She visits the schools, introduces the art and history aspects of the competition, to the Principal and Faculty, with follow - up visits, making sure the rules are followed i.e. the entries are properly labeled (students name, school

**Some examples of the 2017 Art Work follows:**



**Handcart**  
Marie Malugin  
Canyon Rim  
Academy, 5th  
grade  
Salt Lake City, UT



**Railroad**  
Samuel Brooks  
Upland Terrace, 4th  
grade, Salt Lake City,

UT



**Walking in Moccasins**  
Violet Powell  
Canyon Rim  
Academy, 5th  
grade  
Salt Lake City, UT



**Walking & Riding along the Wagon Train**  
Bowie Schroeffer,  
Canyon Rim Academy,  
5th grade, Salt Lake  
City, UT



**Horse and Rider**  
Trevor Sperry  
Canyon Rim  
Academy 5th grade  
Salt Lake City, UT



**Travois**  
Audrey Wilcox  
Canyon Rim Academy,  
5th grade, Salt Lake  
City, UT

Promoting this yearly contest is something which could be done, by Parents and Grand Parents. It would be great to get an additional school or two each year. What a great opportunity to combine Art Skills and Pioneer History.

There are 14 chances to win each year - Front and Back Covers and 12 months. The theme this year (1917) was Emigrant & Indian - Modes of Transportation. Emigrant & Indian Musical Instruments is the theme for the 2018 Calendar.

## **Recent Trail Resource Issues**, from multiple sources

### **Knolls 'Gypsite Mine' sand operation on Hastings Cutoff-sand dune**

*Ray Kelsey, BLM to Crossroads in June:*

There is a gypsite sand mining operation proposed for the sand dune located due west of the Clean Harbors Clive landfill near the Hastings Cutoff. The sand would be sold for soil amendments on large agricultural farms. They have already been mining on state land nearby. I recently went out on a site visit to verify the presence of the Hastings Cutoff trail and took photos of ruts and signs. Our archaeologist is confident we found the location of the trail crossing over the sand dune and the small playa between the next one. The historic setting in this area is largely intact, especially since the presence of the sand dune blocks the visitors view of the Clean Harbors landfill site to the east.

Disturbances from the Knolls Magcorp developments to the west are unnoticeable from this location. OCTA trail markers are in good shape. I added a few more. This may be one of the last remaining intact trail traces we have on the playa between Clean Harbors and Floating Island. I would like to verify this with you.

The proposed mining could impact the trail both physically and visually, especially in Phases 3 and 4 on the project area map. The proponents have been made fully aware of the historical significance of the trail and our concern to avoid adverse impacts. We are in the preliminary stages of analyzing this proposal. Much more will follow.

Here is the link to view the environmental assessment that is in progress:

<https://eplanning.blm.gov/epl-front-office/eplanning/projectSummary.do?methodName=renderDefaultProjectSummary&projectId=61697>

I will keep you informed of any developments. Please let me know if you would like to meet to discuss or comment on the proposal.

Ray Kelsey 6/8/2016

### **An August Response from Roy Tea:**

The Toxic dump is on a state school section 16 and I am sure that they received permission to use that section. The section is surrounded by BLM administered land. The problem is the waste dump needs to expand but I do not think it should at the trails expense.

The waste dump is taking land outside of the designated area, destroying the only remaining part of the HT north of Knolls. There are some pristine sections\_of the trail that the dump has taken to the west and will destroy if they are allowed to continue.

We have already lost some six or seven miles of the most outstanding wheel impressions ruts of the trail to the west\_because of the evaporation pond operation by the Magnesium Corporation Company and do not need to lose more. If the dump needs more space let the BLM relinquish ground, on the north side of the dump which is an old sand dune not the mud flats where you can still see the wagon tracks left there by the 1846-50 migration.

The toxic waste dump operation has taken a small section out of the trail by their excavation of the playa on the west side of the dump. If the dump continues west it will destroy more of the trail that you can still see

and follow to the first sand dune Island and the last remaining trail of the migration in this area. It is sad to think we will lose the actual wheel tracks that can be seen on the mud flats. If the dump is allowed also to take the first sand dune Island to the west, the trail that you can see across the island will also be lost.

THE TOXIC DUMP WAS GIVEN PERMISSION TO USE THE state school section #16 for the dump and to stay within the boundaries of the section but they have extended to the west on the playa and BLM administered land and destroying some of the trail, I believe this was done without the BLM PERMISSION.

### **Linda Turner Response – August 24<sup>th</sup>**

We absolutely must prevent further pristine trail damage in this area. Per Roy's email, I'd agree that this is one of the last remaining pristine, intact trail trace on the playa between Clean Harbor and Floating Island.

Linda Turner, OCTA Crossroads PR

### **BLM Update, August 24th**

On Wed, Aug 24, 2016 at 9:41 AM, Kelsey, Rayner <[rkelsey@blm.gov](mailto:rkelsey@blm.gov)> wrote:

We recently had a meeting with the project proponent. They are certainly onboard with preserving the trail. Their contractor is still drafting the environmental assessment which we will provide for your review once we get it. If you look at the project map, they have agreed to drop the Phase 4 area to preserve the trail trace. We also discussed with them the concept that in Phase 3, they would limit their take of sand dune in that area to prevent any decrease in the current height of the dune, in order to shield the trail viewshed from Clean Harbors (which the dune currently does). Phase 1 and 2 do not look to impact the trail corridor. There was also some discussion about how the dune may regenerate quickly enough that they might not need to go into Phase 3. We will ask them to write into the plan that Phase 3 will be dropped if the anticipated sand dune regeneration occurs as expected.

That's all for now. And I fully concur that this is the last section of unaltered trail trace on the playa before you get to Floating Island. I have seen the ruts myself now and am committed to preserving them at all costs.

Ray Kelsey

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### **BLM Philosophy on Trail Ruts – August 25, 2016, 12:09 PM**

#### **Re: Knolls 'Gypsite Mine' sand operation on Hastings Cutoff-sand dune**

I also wanted to share with you our philosophy here about the trail ruts that were "lost" after the mid-80s pumping on the salt playa. Based on the rut excavation work conducted near the Donner Reed wagons in the early 80s, we do not feel that the ruts on the playa have been truly lost. They are still physically there and have just been covered over with sediments. There is still a historical resource there to protect and myself and the cultural staff intend to proceed accordingly in the future.

We are looking at doing a replication of the wagon ruts excavation in the Pilot Valley sometime in the future to demonstrate the ruts are still there despite decades of natural processes. If OCTA members want to participate in this effort, I will keep you in the loop.

Also, I have been working on new interpretive panels for two sites near Floating Island and Donner Reed Pass to tell the real story of the Hastings Cutoff. When the drafts are ready, I will share them with you to get your feedback.

Ray Kelsey

**BLM withdrawal-Simpson Springs and Historic Site in Tooele County** - Aug 11, 2016 Linda Turner wrote:

FYI - July 26th, I got a letter from Matthew Preston, Field Manager/BLM. Our valued BLM 'partners' have been busy.

The letter referred to the webpage below. **It involves withdrawing 747.104 acres of federally administered public land at Simpson Springs Recreation Management Area AND Historic Site in Tooele County, Utah.** The withdrawal is to protect the recreational, historical, and visual resources and to protect site developments from potentially surface disturbing activities.

I haven't found exact locations, borders and which 'historic site in Tooele... no maps. Maybe maps are in the Decker Lake location.

Comments will be accepted until **October 11th 2016** (and may be posted for the public to see- your name and all). Feel free to view proposals at the BLM Decker Lake location. Send comments to BLM Utah State Director, 440 W. 200 S., Ste. 500, SLC, Ut. 84101-1345 Phone: [\(801\) 539-4001](tel:8015394001)

Check out the webpage: <https://www.blm.gov/ut/enbb/>

**Response From T. Mike Smith, Preservation Dir.**

I have been aware of this for a while. It is a renewal and an expansion. I have a response in draft which I will probably send off soon; saying basically; I think it is a good thing. Until Next Time, T. Mike Smith

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**Our annual BBQ social is scheduled for Friday, Sept. 9<sup>th</sup> at 6:30, dinner at 7:00 PM**

The catered meal (at the **Fort Douglas Museum**, 32 Potter Street, Salt Lake City UT) will be followed by a special lecture delivered by Craig Anderson. A long time member of the Twenty Wells Chapter of the SUP and trail historian/scholar of the Tooele/Grantsville area.

The cost of the meal will be \$18.00 per person. Please report your anticipated attendance with a head count to Drew Wanosik ([dwanosik@xmission.com](mailto:dwanosik@xmission.com)) by Wednesday morning, September 7<sup>th</sup>.



**Additional OCTA Award Photos:** (L) Vic Heath for Long Term Service Award (accepted by Crossroads President, Terry Welch) and (R) Jesse & Nancy Peterson received the Elaine McNabney Award for trail marking.



## The Eyes of the Young by Brooke Larsen

Bears's Ears-Bluff, Utah, from *Red Rock Stories*— (reprinted with permission from Ms. Larsen and Torrey House Press)

As I descend the sticky sandstone cliffs into the Dirty Devil wilderness, anxiety seeps over me. Heading into the backcountry for three days makes me stop and run through any unsent emails before leaving cell service behind. Initially, my unease in disconnecting from technology overshadows my relief in reconnecting with nature. But as a child of the red rock, that feeling quickly fades. My jaw loosens, my eyes come alive, and I howl. I hear the echo as a reminder that I am untamable.

I am in my early twenties. My generation is screen saturated and nature deprived. We find constant connection in our digital world, yet we hunger for depth. Our friendships grow in quantity rather than quality. Our relationship with our self and our environment degrades as our fear of solitude and silence grows. It's not revolutionary to say my generation needs wilderness more than ever.

I reach the Dirty Devil and sink my feet in the mud at the river's edge. Joy tingles every inch of my flesh, awakening my wild spirit. For me, few things match the beauty and awe of flowing water in a landscape of red. Even the rivers run red. One could say this landscape is parched earth, but as long as rivers flow, life seems in perfect balance. If I have children, will they also find a flowing Dirty Devil in 50 years?

The forces trying to desecrate this landscape not only leave initial scars, schisms and spills. The oil rigs and natural gas flares contribute to a much more existential threat—climate change. For my generation, it's impossible to separate the need for wildness from the need for climate justice. Protecting this landscape is not just protecting our human spirit—it's protecting the future of all life in the region. With daunting climate change predictions for the region, it's realistic to wonder if the Dirty Devil will still flow for the next generation. The economic, legal and biological ramifications of a water-stressed Colorado River Basin are well known. But what about the spiritual?

Crossing the Dirty Devil River, I head towards the canyons of the Robbers Roost. In popular culture, Robbers Roost is known as the outlaw hideout of Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid. For desert dwellers, it's known for its wildness. Here, I follow coyote tracks rather than human footprints. I respect the power of water and wind to carve stories into walls. I experience desperately needed solitude and silence.

The red rock wilderness is my spiritual refuge and teacher of humility. In a society where young people can navigate anywhere with an app, I learn from navigating based on geologic layers and topographic lines. In a culture where we can have food delivered to us in minutes, I learn from planning my survival around the dependability of perennial streams. We realize our own insignificance. We realize our vulnerability.

For me, protecting this place is deeply personal. My family has called Utah home for six generations, but I didn't grow up with religion. I grew up questioning. My story is written in carved slot canyons and desert washes. Wildness became my spiritual refuge—particularly the red rock wilderness of southern Utah. So if I respect the churches of others, why are the leaders of my state constantly disrespecting mine?

My red rock story is one of self-preservation. As the lands and people around me grow increasingly tamed, I fear I will lose my own wild, human spirit. Each drop of oil extracted digs me into a deeper existential crisis as I wonder if under a changing climate this region will remain livable.

The eyes of young people are closely watching. The spirits of future generations are pleading. The deep time of the red rock inspires hope—from the geologic story told in layers of orange, pink and red to the rock art left by ancestors of Native Americans who still call Bears Ears home. However, increasingly it feels like we are running out of time.

Our leaders must choose between greed and restraint. Our leaders must choose between preserving the American spirit and destroying it. Our leaders must choose a healthy, safe future for their grandchildren or immediate profit for themselves. If we think ethically and compassionately, the decision is not hard. As a young person, I implore you to act wisely and lovingly.

Brooke Larsen's "The Eyes of the Young" is forthcoming in *Red Rock Stories: Three Generations of Writers Speak on Behalf of Utah's Public Lands* from Torrey House Press and reprinted with permission. Learn more about America's red rock country at [www.redrockstories.org](http://www.redrockstories.org).

## Scheduled Events

**September 9, 2016** The annual BBQ social is scheduled for Friday, Sept. 9<sup>th</sup> 6:30, dinner at 7:00 PM at the Fort Douglas Museum, Salt Lake City

**October 15, 2016** Fall field trip on the Bidwell/Bartleson trail from Corinne to Donner Springs

**November 10, 2016** Fall lecture -- Bill McKinnon will be the feature speaker

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Oregon-California Trails Association (OCTA)

<http://www.utahcrossroads.org>

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