



# CROSSROADS

## News of the Utah Crossroads Chapter

Oregon-California Trails Association  
Vol. 25, No. 1, February 2014

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### Confronting Phragmites at Donner Springs

By Terry Welch

#### The Problem

A few seeds of the invasive Phragmites plant, likely brought in by birds, has severely compromised the spring and pond. The scene we have enjoyed in the past in looking across the pond to the Salt Flats to the east or looking across the pond to picturesque Pilot Peak to the west is currently not possible. Not only is standing water in the pond not visible, there is not enough open water to permit a duck to land. As for the visible discharge from the pond; what was once a clear small running stream has been reduced to minor seepage.



#### Preparation

After receiving permission from Gar and advice from Vern, T. Michael and Oscar, an e-mail was sent to Mr. Tanner, the new owner of the ranch. He gave both permission and encouragement.

Contact was made three natural resource source units. One of the wildlife agencies supplied us with sufficient amounts of the two needed solutions (to be mixed with water) without charge. The best equipment decision I made was to reject my inclination to use a garden sprayer and follow counsel

and procure a backpack sprayer. Anything less would have been totally inadequate.

#### On Site Work

A friend, Art Michaelson (a trail/site enthusiast) agreed to come along. He even offered to bring his waders and safety gear and do the actual spraying; an offer that could not be refused!



For nearly 2 ½ hours Art made his way into the heavy growth at spaced intervals and then sprayed as he backed out using the same trail opening. At each entry point his 6' 4" frame would disappear for 5-8 minutes.



Phragmites at Donner cont'd. – next page.

### The Future

Mr. Tanner will care for the next step; a burn of the dead leaves during the winter. (We are grateful for his active interest in preserving the area as both a historical site and in protecting the view scape.) Another spray treatment will be needed in the spring. What follows will be determined with ongoing evaluation. We anticipate the re-emergence of a pond.

### Follow-Up

The report came back in early December that the Phragmites appears to be doing well at the springs. This has puzzled me more than a little bit. I knew it wasn't because it did not get a pretty good

coating. My buddy, Art, worked really hard at getting good coverage. I wondered about out of date spray, etc. Anyway, just today – December 13, 2013, Art and I made a journey out to the Farmington Bay Refuge to look for bird photo shots. (It was here that we obtained the spray.) We found a facility manager and told him of our experience. His immediate comment was something like, "you can't tell if it worked 'til spring". Apparently it takes that much of a season for it to work on the roots. The message renewed our hope that success is still pending. (He said that another treatment will likely be needed next fall.)

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### T-Tail Installations

By Jess Petersen

This is just to let you know that we had a successful work day on October 5<sup>th</sup> last fall. The participants were myself, Jeff Pashley, Victor Heath, Oscar Olson, T Mike Smith, and Bryce Billings. Bryce was accompanied by four family members but I can't remember their names. We installed five posts in the Snake Valley area. Four at sites along Simpson's return trail; South Tule Spring, Cowboy Pass, Knoll Spring, and Baker Creek. One post was on Simpson's outbound route at Trout Creek. This completes the installation of all of the Central Overland Trail markers that were planned for this year. Making a total of 22 posts installed during 2013.

### Spring Chapter Meeting

Gar Elison

When we scheduled the county building for the Spring meeting we were not aware that the political parties would schedule their caucus meeting on March 19 and 20. Oscar was successful in getting the county to give

us another night and our Spring meeting has been rescheduled for April 24, at 7:00 p.m. in the Salt Lake County Commission Chambers.

We have the room on the 24th of April from 6:00 to 10 p.m. I'd like to potentially hold a board meeting at 6:00 p.m., if needed.

Bob Leonard, with the U.S. Forest Service, has agreed to speak about research that he is developing with trail marking and dating by tree rings along the Old Spanish Trail. I thank Mike Landon for working with Bob on the topic. Our field trip will be in May, but we are now waiting for a determination as to when the snow will be out of the canyon and the roads will be opened. We will have better insight by our meeting on April 24th. We are looking for the 9 & 10 or the 16 & 17 of May as potential dates – again dependent on the snow and road condition, but prior to the Memorial Day weekend.

We need to hold an interim board meeting in February. Based on feedback received so far it appears the 26th will work for everyone. Noon will be the time and I'm

still waiting on which room we can use. I'll get back to the board in a couple of days with specifics on the room.

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### In Memorial

#### H. Rush Spedden – 1916-2013

H. Rush Spedden, Engineer/Scientist, Teacher, Historian and Skier passed away on December 27, 2013 at the age of 97. Born in Colville, WA in 1916, Rush grew up in a west in transition from horses to cars. As a teenager he witnessed the impact of the Great Depression. To pay for college, he worked summers in a silver mine in the mountains of Idaho, advancing from an underground mucker to a mill operator. He graduated from the University of Washington in Mining Engineering and went on to receive a Master's degree at Montana School of Mines. In 1940 he was recruited to MIT to join Dr. A.M. Gaudin's new mineral processing group which became world-renowned for advancements in the science of mineral processing. In 1942, as part of the war effort, Rush was sent to Bolivia to boost production of tin. In 1944, he was commissioned as a Lieutenant in the Army and sent to Europe in the Corps of Engineers. He was stationed in Bavaria with responsibilities for reinstating coal production. In 1946, he returned to MIT as an Assistant Professor.

A skilled white water canoeist, Rush met his future bride, Betty (also a skilled canoeist) on an Appalachian Mountain Club trip in 1948. They were married in 1951.

Rush joined Union Carbide in New York in 1952, advancing to Director of Research. His duties took him to Africa and South America working on recovery of exotic metal used in batteries and nuclear devices. It was in this period that he received the first of his many patents for inventions in

the field of metallurgy. In 1964 he was recruited to be Director of Research for Kennecott Copper's Western Mining Division in Salt Lake City, UT. Also in that year he was awarded an Honorary Professional Degree in Mineral Dressing by the Montana School of Mines. Rush was a life-long advocate of the Society of Mining Engineers of AIME starting as president of his student section to being named President of the Society of Mining Engineers in 1970. Rush also mentored many young engineers, encouraging them to join the mission to meet the growing need for efficient recovery and utilization of mineral resources. For his dedication to the advancement of mineral processing technology. Rush was honored with the Robert H. Richards award by AIME. Rush retired from Kennecott in 1977, but continued to consult in the field for many years after that.

Rush had a broad range of interests. He was always an avid historian and geologist, and a professor at heart. He could be counted on for absolutely fascinating impromptu lectures on a broad range of subjects. His family has fond memories of driving around the country learning of the flow of history both in geological and human terms. In 1972 he started tracing the pioneer trails through Utah, correcting many misconceptions through the use of science, great detective work and the latest technologies. The Bureau of Land Management asked Rush to mark the route of the Hastings Cutoff west of Salt Lake

(the route taken by the ill-fated Donner party and by those heading west for the California gold rush). In later years he directed his attention to the trails near Fort Bridger. He was the author of numerous historical articles and he wrote the Hastings Cutoff section of Peter DeLafosse's 1994 book *Trailing the Pioneers*. Rush's work has also been cited by others in their publications. In 2011 at the age of 94, Rush was awarded the Oregon-California Trails Association's Merrill Mattes Award for Excellence in writing for his article published a year earlier titled "Lansford Hastings, Orson Pratt, Google Earth and GPS" in which Rush used modern technology to calculate the "instrument error" in Orson Pratt's sextant and then based on that and ground observation (in Rush's Jeep), he successfully identified a lost section of the trail the first Mormons took to Salt Lake. In another enthralling piece of detective work, Rush gives a compelling argument for the T.H. Jefferson of an early map of the Hastings Cutoff being Thomas Hemings Jefferson, the son of Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings.

Rush has been a life-long skier. He told of skiing on barrel staves as a young boy. Rush and Betty went skiing at Mt. Tremblant in Canada for their honeymoon. Rush was a founder of the "Wild old Bunch" at Alta, a nationally known collection of older skiers. He coined the name when he produced a home movie of his friends skiing powder and put it to music. Many will remember his graceful powder skiing style and the fact that he continued to ski the powder into his 90's.

Rush is survived by his wife and lifelong companion in many wonderful adventures, Betty, and his four children, Sarah, David, Rick and Catherine and four grandchildren.

A memorial service will be held in the early spring; a time and place will be posted on [www.WildoldBunch.org](http://www.WildoldBunch.org). In lieu of flowers, please make donations to the Alf Engen Ski Museum Foundation or your preferred charity.

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### **Volunteer Activities & Projects:**

We had a very successful work day for National Public Lands Day on September 28, 2013. The BLM Salt Lake District Office sponsored a work day in Skull Valley at one of its new Hastings Cutoff Trail interpretive sites.

About three years ago, the Crossroads Chapter, the BLM district office, and the National Trails Office in Salt Lake City partnered to develop a series of six low-profile interpretive wayside exhibits for the Hastings Cutoff. Three were to be installed at Horseshoe Spring and three on the summit of Hastings Pass.

The first three of these six waysides were installed at the Spring, near the original trail ruts that cut southwest toward the turn heading to the Cedar Mountains. Approximately six to eight chapter volunteers spent the better part of the morning and early afternoon digging holes for cementing in the exhibit bases – some months before, the BLM had dumped several loads of stone and fill on the site to prepare a nice level viewing pad. The stone made the digging a little more challenging, but perseverance won out.

Volunteer Activities cont'd. – next page.

Sometime this coming Spring, after the snow melts on Hasting's Pass, we'll announce



Installing interpretive wayside exhibits and site signs on a National Public Lands Day project at Horseshoe Springs in Skull Valley, Utah – September 30, 2013.

another work day and install the remaining three interpretive exhibits.




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### Trail Excerpts:

From the Desk of Michael Landon

Following are two letters that I transcribed years ago. They were written by emigrants who passed through Salt Lake, one in January 1850 and one in November 1850. One original is from the Nevada State Historical Society in Reno and the other is at the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. Although the two emigrants passed through Salt Lake one year apart, they have entirely different perspectives about the Mormons.

**Charles W. Bush letter, 10 Jan. 1850, [Eighty miles from Sacramento], to [his brother] Michael, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.**

“I will now give you some account of our journey across the plains. We came by the Salt Lake City and it proved the most dangerous part of our route . . . the mormans were not friendly towards the emigrants and did all they could to anoy

them. They took and tried many for pretended offenses and the indian tribes which they have in perfect subjection they excited against us so they kept us in continued alarme both night and day as long as we were in their country, often time the grass was fired by night thereby endangering our lives and property.

Trail Excerpts cont'd. – next page.

Prowling bands of indians were seen moving about constantly. Many migrants were [killed?] and the indians were more troublesome from then on than they had been on all the rest of the route. We struck the Fort Hall road at Steple Rock, then we came to Humboldt's river where the indians gave us a great deal of trouble."

**Samuel C. Morrison, Letter, 15 Nov. 1850, Cold Spring, California, to Dear Brother, Nevada State Historical Society, Reno, Nevada**

We arrived at the great Salt Lake Valley on the 4<sup>th</sup> day of Aug. When you first come in sight of this valley from the summit of the Echo Mountains it presents a most splendid scenery, after traveling so long over a most barren country, to see every thing look fresh and green and the beautiful blue Lake in the center, it put me in mind of the States, after winding down this mountain for about 25 miles you get in the valley, and 5 miles from the edge of this valley is the great Mormon City one of the greatest curiosities I ever seen, the City is regularly laid out in wards which contain about 320 acres of land and those wards are divided into smaller squares, with streets running at right angles through the City, At the side of every street there is a beautiful stream of pure Mountain water flowing along

The City contains 18 Wards in the center of which is a large temporary Chapel in which they hold their Meetings. I was at one of their meetings one Sunday afternoon and was much amused at their proceedings, the preaching was good and they had as good a band of Singers and instrumental players as ever I

heard, they have but this one church so their congregations are very large perhaps on an ordinary occasion they will number 5000, they are not strict at all in their religious views, they work on Sunday when they please and let it alone when they do not feel like it. In this City every man is entitled to as many wives as he can support providing his first wife is willing for him to marry more.

Their leader, Brigham Young, has 63 and I know a number of men there that has more than one wife, but it is not a general thing for a man to have more than one

The Mormons are an Industrious, intelligent, and an enterprising people, mostly from the eastern states, and generally have a good education, and not the poor miserable set I supposed that they was, but are kind generous and hospitable to strangers, entirely beyond the christian [sic] people in the states. If you go to a mormon's house to get any thing to eat you get it if you have money to pay for it, it is all right if not it is just as well. I boarded with a mormon all the time that I staid here, and had good boarding which was a treat worthy of remembrance after traveling over the plains.

It was harvest time when we was here and wages was from five to ten dollars a day, some of our train went to work here and made considerable money while we staid here. The grain here is raised by irrigating the soil so the harvests last for 3 or 4 months, around this valley on every side is very high mountains whose tops are covered with perpetual snow and Ice, the mountain scenery

from the City is proba[b]ly the most magnificent in the world entirely beyond description, so you will never know any

thing about them until you behold them for yourself.

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### **Volunteer Activity Report**

Coordinator: Nila Eldredge

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Donations of time, talent, funds, and equipment to volunteer organizations like ours make what we do possible. Many have been generous, and we thank them. OCTA is a 501c3 so be wise and utilize the tax laws and your favorite financial advisor in making the most of your tax-deductible donations. We remind you to consider making any final donations you may find needful before the end of the year to simplify our Crossroads paperwork and meet the end of 2014 year IRS requirements. Because of tax law, Crossroads does not appraise the value of equipment you may be or have donated.

Those who want to further help our Crossroads program can earmark funds for the purchase of plaques to go on our many T-markers. In 2014 we

will probably need to raise a little more money, volunteer labor and transportation to purchase additional plaques and place the many markers we have in the works.

Besides making the various donations, each of us should also be reporting those donations. Please send Nila Eldredge at: ([nila@trailbuff.com](mailto:nila@trailbuff.com)) the hours, miles and dollar amounts you may have spent assisting Crossroads trails programs during 2014. Each year we compile those figures for OCTA. That report is used in various ways to directly assist our efforts in identifying and preserving historic trail.

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**Scheduled Events**

- **February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2014** – Crossroads Chapter Board Meeting – location to be determined.
- **April 22<sup>nd</sup> 2014** – Crossroads Chapter Spring Meeting at the **Salt Lake County Commission Chambers**, north building near 21<sup>st</sup> south State Street, at 7:00 pm.
- **August 5 – 9, 2014, OCTA** – 32nd Nat'l Convention, Kearney, Nebraska
- **September 20 – 26, 2015, OCTA Convention**, South Lake Tahoe, California.

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Oregon-California Trails Association (OCTA)

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