
**NW Chapter Oregon-California Trails Association (OCTA) Newsletter
Monthly E-Newsletter**

May 2010 Submission

**Submitted by Leta Neiderheiser, Mike Walker, and Karen Rose,
Members NW Chapter OCTA**

In This Issue

NW Chapter OCTA Field Trip to Hugo Segments Of Applegate Trail Scheduled for September 10 - 12, 2010 in Grants Pass, Oregon. This is an overview for the September 11, 2010 field trip. Specifics for the trip and sign up procedures will be provided in a separate communication.

Sponsors are the NW Chapter OCTA, Josephine County Historical Society, and the Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society

Speakers

Leta Neiderheiser and Mike Walker, Members of NW Chapter OCTA, are the leaders for a one-day NW Chapter OCTA field trip to the Applegate Trail in northern Josephine County, Oregon scheduled for September 11, 2010.

Leta is a descendant of Jesse Applegate. She is a member of the NW Chapter OCTA; NW Chapter OCTA Monitoring Coordinator, Medford to Wolf Creek Applegate Trail; Member Oregon Historic Trails Advisory Council; Member of the Josephine County Historical Society; and a Member of the Hugo Emigrant Trails Committee. She is the author of *Annie's Story, Life in Early 20th Century Western Oregon*, and has a release date in the fall of 2010 for a book on the life of *Jesse Applegate, A Dialogue with Destiny*.

Karen Rose is the Web Master for the Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society (*Hugo Neighborhood*). She is a member of the NW Chapter OCTA; Member of the Josephine County Historical Society; Co-Project Leader, Hugo Emigrant Trails Committee, *Hugo Neighborhood*, and Member of the Diaries, Journals & Reminiscences Sub-Committee, Hugo Emigrant Trails Committee. Karen has conducted comprehensive research of the diaries, journals and reminiscences applicable to the *Trail* in northern Josephine County.
<http://www.jeffnet.org/~hugo/diaries.htm>

Jean Boling is the Historic Sites Chair, Josephine County Historical Society (<http://www.josephinehistorical.org/>). She is a member of the Josephine County Historical Society, *Hugo Neighborhood*, and Hugo Emigrant Trails Committee. Jean has conducted comprehensive research of the cemeteries of Josephine County. <http://www.interment.net/us/or/josephine.htm>. She is the co-author of the 2007 *Assessment Of Proposed Pioneer Meadows Subdivision Containing Applegate Trail Resources*. Copyright © by *Hugo Neighborhood*; Josephine County Historical Society; Goal One Coalition; Rogue Advocates; and Oregon-California Trails Association (<http://jeffnet.org/~threepines/AP.htm>).

Mike Walker is the Education Chair for the *Hugo Neighborhood*. He is a member of the NW Chapter OCTA; NW Chapter OCTA Monitoring Coordinator, Hugo Region of Applegate Trail; Member of the Josephine County Historical Society; Co-Project Leader, Hugo Emigrant Trails Committee, *Hugo Neighborhood*; and Member Hugo General Land Office (GLO) Field Review Sub-Committee, Hugo Emigrant Trails Committee. He is the lead author of the 2007 *Assessment Of Proposed Pioneer Meadows Subdivision Containing Applegate Trail Resources*. (<http://www.jeffnet.org/~hugo/applegat.htm>), and the lead author and/or contributing author of numerous articles on the *Trail* in northern Josephine County (<http://www.jeffnet.org/~hugo/applegat.htm>).

Kelly Rarey is a member of the GLO Field Review Sub-Committee, Hugo Emigrant Trails Committee. His special expertise is approximately 20 plus years earning a living as a surveyor. This surveying experience provides a new focus for using the 1850s GLO survey notes and maps with GPS calculations (OCTA's MET Manual) in combination with using modern local surveys. This integrated method is the key to locating emigrant trails within a couple of feet versus the 30 - 50 feet accuracy of the stand alone GLO/GPS method. He is the co-author of numerous site specific analyses of Applegate Trail locations in the Hugo region. *Applegate Trail Inventory*. <http://www.jeffnet.org/~hugo/applegat.htm>. *Hugo/NW Oregon-California Trail Association (OCTA), Applegate Trail Mapping*. <http://www.jeffnet.org/~hugo/hugo-applegatetrailmapping.htm>. What makes this method even more effective is the dialogue and quality control between the seven member GLO Field Review Sub-Committee which, including Kelly, includes three folks with surveying experience totally over 65 years.

August 2010 Speaker Update

Jean Boling and Kelly Rarey have conflicts and will not be able to attend the outing. However, we have a new speaker, Chelsea Rose. Chelsea is an Archeologist presently conducting research on the Applegate Trail within our area of interest.

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NW CHAPTER OCTA FIELD TRIP

The September 11, 2010 field trip will be a whirlwind tour of a dozen sites or so of the two Applegate Trail routes (i.e., Illinois Valley route and Jacksonville route) in northern Josephine County, Oregon from the Rogue River in the south to Grave Creek in the north. It could include the two major 1846 & 1847 fordings of the Rogue River; the approximate 1846 location where the emigrants encamped for the night on the north side of Mt. Sexton where 16-year old Martha Leland Crowley died of Typhoid Fever (Leland Creek that became Grave Creek is named for her); 1847 sub-irrigated prairie encampment that still does not have trees because the serpentine derived soils have too much magnesium and not enough calcium; a 310' segment of the *Trail* at Mt. Sexton Summit improved as a military road by Major Alvord in 1853; the Harris family cabin location along the *Trail* where Mary Harris lost her husband, son, and hired hand during the 1855 Rogue River Indian War, the 1855 Widow Niday house location along the *Trail* burnt during the Rogue River Indian War; the 1855 *Trail* through the emigrant Pleasant Valley Cemetery, and other *Trail* locations.

MET Manual The seven member Hugo GLO Subcommittee is aggressively researching, inventorying, and marking the *Trail* in northern Josephine County. The sites scheduled for the September 11, 2010 field trip were located by the GLO Subcommittee using the inventory methodology described in OCTA's *Mapping Emigrant Trails Manual*, including the composite trail description method of integrating diaries, journals, reminiscences, aerial photographs, and government reports.

Glen Campbell
Jim Ford
Rene Ford
Joe Neiderheiser
Kelly Rarey
Mike Walker
Chris Wytcherley

The first tier of focus for locating the *Trail* sites is through the use of accurate historical and modern government survey notes (i.e., the 1850s GLO survey notes and maps, 1850s donation land claim survey notes and maps, modern local Josephine County surveys and maps, and the GPS, including bearing and distance measurements). This method is being used because after 150 years the *Trail* in wet western Oregon is usually buried beneath 6 - 12 inches of soil and debris. In the field what is usually seen is the participant's imagination. Ruts are gone and traces are few, but a verified surveyed *Trail* site can make sense of the local terrain where there are several skid roads, and faint traces aligned along the recorded course of the *Trail* which clear up otherwise normally appearing swales. And, on occasion, the mystery of a cairn appears at the end of a GPS track.

These verified surveyed *Trail* sites greatly facilitate the search for the *Trail* by showing the researcher where to look for *Trail* traces. They solve the mystery of several trail traces or logging skid roads in the vicinity in determining and verifying which of the traces or evolved roads are related to emigrant wagon use.

An effective means of applying diaries, journals, reminiscences, and government reports, including GLO survey notes and maps, to locate and verify particularly vexing segments of emigrant trails is creating a composite trail description. You begin by gathering together as many accounts as possible that describe in any way the trail segment under study. Descriptions, for example, could include references to rivers and creeks, fords, mountains, bluffs, ridges, ravines, roads (i.e., Road from Willamette Valley to Jacksonville and Road to Illinois Valley via Van Noys Ferry), forks in the *Trail*, and any distances or directions recorded. Arranging all of these descriptions — really clues — in some kind of sequential order will reveal the course, direction, and location of the trail. In this way, a detailed composite description of the trail segment under study can be created. Diaries, journals, reminiscences that describe human thoughts, actions, and fears for a particular trail segment bring the physical alive with human suffering and hope for the future.

Special Value of the 1854 - 1855 GLO Survey Notes for the Rogue Valley The accuracy of the 1854 - 1855 GLO surveys has been verified by local surveyors in Josephine County, Oregon as well as an independent researcher (Atwood, Kay. 2008. *Chaining Oregon*, Surveying the Public Lands of the Pacific Northwest: 1851 - 1855. McDonald & Woodward Publishing Company. Granville, OH).

In northern Josephine County the 1854 - 1855 GLO surveys for the Rogue Valley, except for the later Rogue River ferries, accurately reflect the emigrant wagon use from 1846 - 1855. The rationale is simple. There were not many settlers in the Rogue Valley that needed improved year around roads until the Indians were defeated and moved out the valley in 1856. In 1855 there were only five settler families in the entire Jump-off Joe Creek drainage: Haines, Harris, Niday, Wagner, and Walker brothers. Except for the Harris cabin, all these families were burned out by the Rogues in October 1855. Until late 1855 - 1856 emigrants were mainly on a one-way fall/winter route north to the Willamette Valley. These emigrants were not building, improving, or relocating the *Trail* for year around use to avoid the wet bottoms of winter. They were not dallying in the valley checking out possible settlement sites. They were moving as fast as they could north through the dry bottom lands and ridges of October and trying to avoid an encounter with hostiles.

Wet Western Oregon In some ways the historic emigrant trails in Western Oregon are the orphans of OCTA's mission. Mostly buried emigrant trails in wet Western Oregon will never provide the comprehensive visual setting for real physical scars, tracks, and ruts still sometimes visible in the relatively pristine deserts of Oregon and California east of the Cascades and the Sierra Nevada. This situation for Oregon has resulted in the huge majority of OCTA's work occurring east of the Cascades mostly on lands administered by the federal government. As a matter of priorities the developed private lowlands of Western Oregon have been by-passed for the relative *Trail* treasures of the desert. However, a good lowland campground with grass and water is still a good campground with archeological prizes.

This problem for Western Oregon has a bright side, and oddly it is the very development that has degraded the historic trails. With this development has come a high density of local modern government surveys for plats, replats, and subdivisions. In many cases these local government surveys, in relationship to the GLO surveys and maps, are the critical keys to locating verified

historic trails within inches rather than the 30 - 50 feet error of the GPS and the additional potential 40 foot error of the 7.5 minute USGS topographic quads. When the researcher also uses the DLC surveys and maps to supplement the GLO surveys the focus can be verified *Trail* survey sites every $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ mile rather than the average GLO surveys of every mile.

Another step for real progress that could be made for *Trail* work in Western Oregon is for OCTA to revise its standards about the significance of verified emigrant trails (i.e., Class 3 Verified Trail and Class 4 Verified Altered Trail). Eventually mother nature and/or development will bury all our historic emigrant trails, even those in the high dry deserts. The archeological approach is accepted and treasured by people, especially urban dwellers, as it opens up the excitement of the scientific method and the imagination of the modern pioneer trail discoverer.