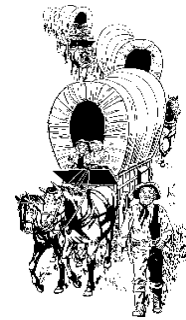


# Trail Dust

Newsletter of the Oregon-California Trails Association, Idaho Chapter  
Vol. XXII Issue II *Amy Ballard, Editor*  
208.764.3631 Aug/Sept 2009



## Goodale's Cutoff Workshop: 55 Miles in Oregon

*Article and photos by James McGill*



**Katy Coddington on the Zig-Zag trail, Road Canyon, Brownlee Reservoir lower background**

Over the weekend of June 18-20, about 35 people from several states met in Baker, Oregon, part of the time at the National Oregon Trail Interpretive Center and participated in a Goodale workshop and trail-tour activities. The tours, all day on the eastern part of Goodale's Cutoff on Friday and a half day on Saturday, followed the trail nearer the trail center and allowed participants to experience the remaining trail remnants.

On Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning trail researchers/presenters offered information on different aspects of Tim and Jennie Goodale's history and

about the search and finding of the remaining part of the trail in

Oregon. The Oregon section of that 1862 trail ran from the Brownlee Ferry in Hells Canyon to the Baker Valley and Auburn, Oregon.

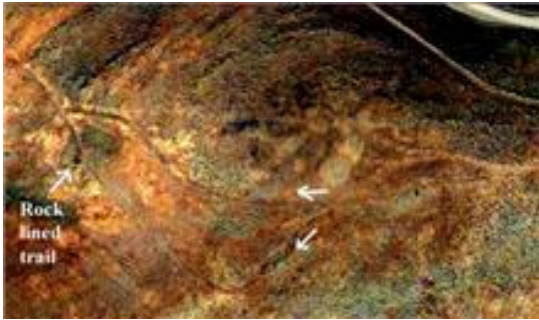
Participants received a 35- page Field Note Report with maps and photos. (If you would like a copy of the report or access to ground and satellite photos of the trail, see contact information at the end of this article).

Since Goodale's Cutoff has been approved for a study concerning the possibility of its being classified as a National Historic Trail, part of the Oregon Trail network of trails, leaders in the BLM, NPS, Idaho Power, OCTA and other groups that assist in preserving parts of the trail were involved in the workshop. Study participants and volunteers who wish to help in the later permanent marking of that trail took part in the informational activities. The trail experience and witnessing what is left of that trail served as an opportunity to turn over existing research and information to those involved in the study.

The BLM had given permission for temporary markers to be placed on sections of the trail for the workshop and tours. Those markers were removed shortly after the workshop.

One outstanding experience from the event took place on Saturday when Katy Coddington of the Baker City BLM office went along for the marking. Trail markers discovered a one-mile section of the oldest swales near Ruckles Creek and parallel to another variant, probably

Tim Goodale's first wagon route, and Katy was able to partially GPS the section.



**Satellite view braids of trail south of China Springs and near Highway 86, ridge trail from Pine valley to Eagle valley**

Early evidence had hinted at this piece of trail, but only later research and ground searching accurately revealed it. This was exciting, after a year's discovery and mapping. The piece had not been included on the GLO map, but the surveyor had recorded its evidence in his notes.

The first-found parallel variant was later used as an area road, joined partially by the 1875 Lower Powder Union Road, and another section became part of the 1891 Seven Devils Wagon Road. The older trail found in May follows rather straightly near the east side of Ruckles Creek, with a little more rising and falling over ridges.

The older route became most of the 1.5-mile hike that Dave Welch used for the trail training at the workshop. The hikers were probably the first in a hundred years or more to cover the whole route and understand its significance.

Fred Dykes presented some of his early research that brought Goodale's Cutoff out of the shadows. Will Bagley presented on Tim Goodale as a road builder and rancher in the Rocky Mountains. Jack and Pat Fletcher offered

information on Tim Goodale's work and adventures in the Colorado/New Mexico areas.

Susan Boyle and John Cannella, New Mexico NPS employees, and Jere Krakow discussed the latest progress on the research and study of the additional trail routes being considered for National Historic Trails status. I discussed the Oregon part of the Goodale trail route, the miles of remnants that have been found, and used Google Earth to follow all the trail remnants for viewing on the big screen.



**Katy Coddington GPSing new Ruckles Creek swale**

This route was new to most participants, and the overall response was enthusiastic and favorable. There was a lot of interest in a similar route tour and information on the Idaho side of the Snake River.

In May or June of 2011, I plan to lead a similar workshop on the trail route from Cambridge to the Brownlee Ferry. Goodale's Cutoff from the Boise Valley to Cambridge has been the subject of several tours, including the 1863 variant through the Crane Creek area, but for folks new to this trail, there may be a driving tour. If you are interested, contact James McGill at [jwmcgill@cablone.net](mailto:jwmcgill@cablone.net) or (208) 467-4853. More information will also appear in future *Trail Dust* and other chapter newsletters.

## Convention Highlights

Instead of asking one person to sum up the convention, we decided to gather attendees' favorite moments and put them together here for those who weren't able to attend.



Some familiar IOCTA faces at the convention courtesy of Bill and Mary Alice Wilson.



Peggy Cristobal provides the picture of the sign welcoming OCTA. She describes a tour of the Newmont gold mine:  
We visited the open pit mine of the Carlin Trend which is north of Carlin. This gave us an up-close view of the BIG trucks and the DEEP pit. The buses took us by the refractory ore treatment plant where the gold is extracted from the ore. We were not allowed to leave the busses and the guide



explained all of the procedures. They have underground mining in that area also. When the mine is exhausted the pit has to be filled and returned to its natural state. The water which is pumped out of the site is used on their farms which raise hay, grain and cattle.



Jerry Eichhorst writes: My tour bus dropped us off in the desert on Highway 93 then went down the road a mile to turn around. Unfortunately, it got stuck when it pulled off the highway leaving us stranded in the desert with no water, no shade, and no place to sit for two hours. Picture above of the stranded bus with the tow truck coming to the rescue.

## Coming Events

### Canyon County OT Tour

On Sept. 25, James McGill will lead a tour of Oregon Trail remnants in Canyon County. A \$20 tour fee will cover the cost of printing information booklets (Canyon Co. Historical Soc. members get a discount). Meet at the Canyon County Trail Depot Museum in Nampa at 9 a.m. Please bring your lunch. The event will raise funds for CCHS. For more information, contact McGill at (208) 467-4853.

### Fall Membership Meeting

Mark your calendar for IOCTA's fall membership meeting at 10:00 am the Oxbow Café in Bliss on Oct. 9.

*From the national OCTA newsletter:*

## **OCTA Announces Fall Symposium in Marysville, Kansas**

If you were at the Elko convention, you heard the announcement that OCTA plans to host a fall symposium from October 8-10 in Marysville, Kansas. Registration forms were handed out and people have already started making plans to descend on the "Trails Capital of Kansas" during Columbus Day weekend 2011. Speakers will present programs on cattle trails, military roads, Native American trails, Ben Holladay's stagecoach and his Oketo Cutoff, the 150th anniversary of the Pony Express, and the history of Marysville/Marshall County. OCTA VP Duane Iles will be on hand to lead visitors around the well-preserved Alcove Spring site, and both bus tours will feature sites never before seen on OCTA tours. The opening reception will include a screening of *In Pursuit of a Dream*, and the keynote speaker will be the Charles and Mary Martin Chair of Western History at the University of Nebraska-Omaha, Michael Tate. He published *The Frontier Army in the Settlement of the West* in 2000 and *Indians and Emigrants: Encounters of the Overland Trails* in 2006. He was also a recipient of OCTA's Merrill Mattes award in 2001. Registration forms are being mailed to all OCTA members or you can register online at the OCTA website.

Also, plans are underway for a spring symposium in Cedar City, Utah from March 26-28, 2011, and another in Fayetteville, Arkansas, likely to be held sometime in April 2011. Be sure to watch for more information



**Photos by Wally Meyer from the recent dedication of the Ada County Oregon Trail Interpretative Center**

### **To our contributors:**

Please send contributions for the next few issues to Jerry Eichhorst, who will be wearing the editor's hat this fall and winter. We can always use articles, family history stories related to the trails, and photos.

Please let us know if you've changed your e-mail address so we can keep our files up-to-date. The address is [idahoocta@gmail.com](mailto:idahoocta@gmail.com).

# Diaries Across Idaho

## Approaching the Boise River

by Jerry Eichhorst

As the emigrants climbed a hill southeast of Boise, they were rewarded with a view of the Boise River valley. From this hill, now called Bonneville Point, the Oregon Trail descended several miles across a number of benches until reaching the Boise River. The last descent was down a steep natural break in the basalt cliff. This route is visible after a short hike from the Ada County Oregon Trail Interpretive Center and Trailhead. Although not difficult compared to many of the stretches encountered thus far on the trail, I wonder how these brave pioneers could lock their wheels and slide down the hill, then barely mention the event in their diaries.



Ramp down the cliff by the new Ada County Oregon Trail Interpretive Center

**[August] 19** Made 30 miles & encamped at the first possible chance we found to descend to the River. Gross Boise or Bigwood I had yet seen & passes rapidly down through a Steep Kenyon which cannot [be] ascended or descended even on foot except in a few places

James Clyman, 1844

**August 16th...** then we came 6 miles further and came to the bluff of the river which is called Boise river here we came to a big hill to go down...

Absolom B. Harden, 1847

**[August] 21st Sunday** Crossed over three bottoms before reaching the river. The first is covered with sage. The second with sage. The second [third] with woods. The 3 with grass.

Celinda E. Hines, 1853

**Wed. [October] 11th.** Descending some steep hills we came down on the river "Boisee" which deserves its appellation from the dense fringes of cottonwood and willow trees that border its banks. We nooned on the Boisee itself.

Theodore Talbot, 1843

**August 6.**—At the end of eleven miles we found a gap in the bluffs of Boyse valley, where we turned down and succeeded in reaching the valley in safety, although our road was very steep and stony, and long. Two miles farther brought us to the river

P. V. Crawford, 1851

**Wednesday, Sept. 15.** We traveled for some 4 miles on a high, level plain, then came down a steep hill of about 200 feet to another equally level plain, on which we traveled about 3 miles, then took another offset of about 100 feet, and in about a mile and a half came to another offset of about the same height, and we were nearly on a level with the river.

Parthenia Blank, 1852

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### **Your Talents are Needed!**



IOCTA needs your help in several areas, including co-editing our newsletter. If you have been watching for a way to get involved, please let us know you're available. Give Jerry Eichhorst a call at (208) 321-4519.