



A STRATEGY FOR PRESERVING HISTORIC TRAILS

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THE QUESTION

How do we improve the preservation of historic trails?



Oregon,
California,
Mormon
Pioneer and
Pony Express
National
Historic Trails,
Big Sandy, WY



INTRODUCTION

The following material is presented from the perspective of a public partnership organization.

It is a proposed course of action for partnership organizations independent of the federal or state agencies responsible for administration or oversight of the trails.



OUTLINE

- Introduction
- A Short History of Oregon Trail Preservation
- OCTA's Trail Resources and Preservation Activities
- Preservation Strategy
- Possible Future PNTS Actions



DEFINITIONS

- Preservation: To keep safe from injury, harm or destruction.
- Conservation: A careful preservation and protection of something.
- Strategy:
 1. The science and art of employing the political, economic, psychological and military forces of a nation... to afford the maximum support of adopted policies in peace or war.
 2. A careful plan or method.

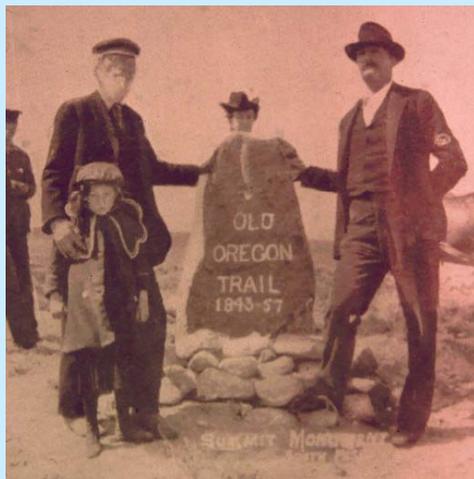


THE STRATEGY

- 1) Obtain organizational commitment
- 2) Document the historic resource
- 3) Prioritize remaining resources
- 4) Develop programs for mapping, marking and monitoring the trail
- 5) Develop partnerships
- 6) Establish government contacts
- 7) Identify private landowners
- 8) Participate in land use decisions
- 9) Acquire land and/or easements (optional)
- 10) Gain public support



EZRA MEEKER AND THE PRESERVATION OF THE OREGON TRAIL



Why? "To perpetuate the identity of the Trail made by the early sturdy pioneers, the battle-ground of peace, to honor the memories of these true heroes and to kindle in the breasts of the rising generation a flame of patriotic sentiment, ..." ^[i]

^[i] Meeker, Ezra, "The Ox Team or The Old Oregon Trail 1852-1906," New York, 1907. pp. 82.

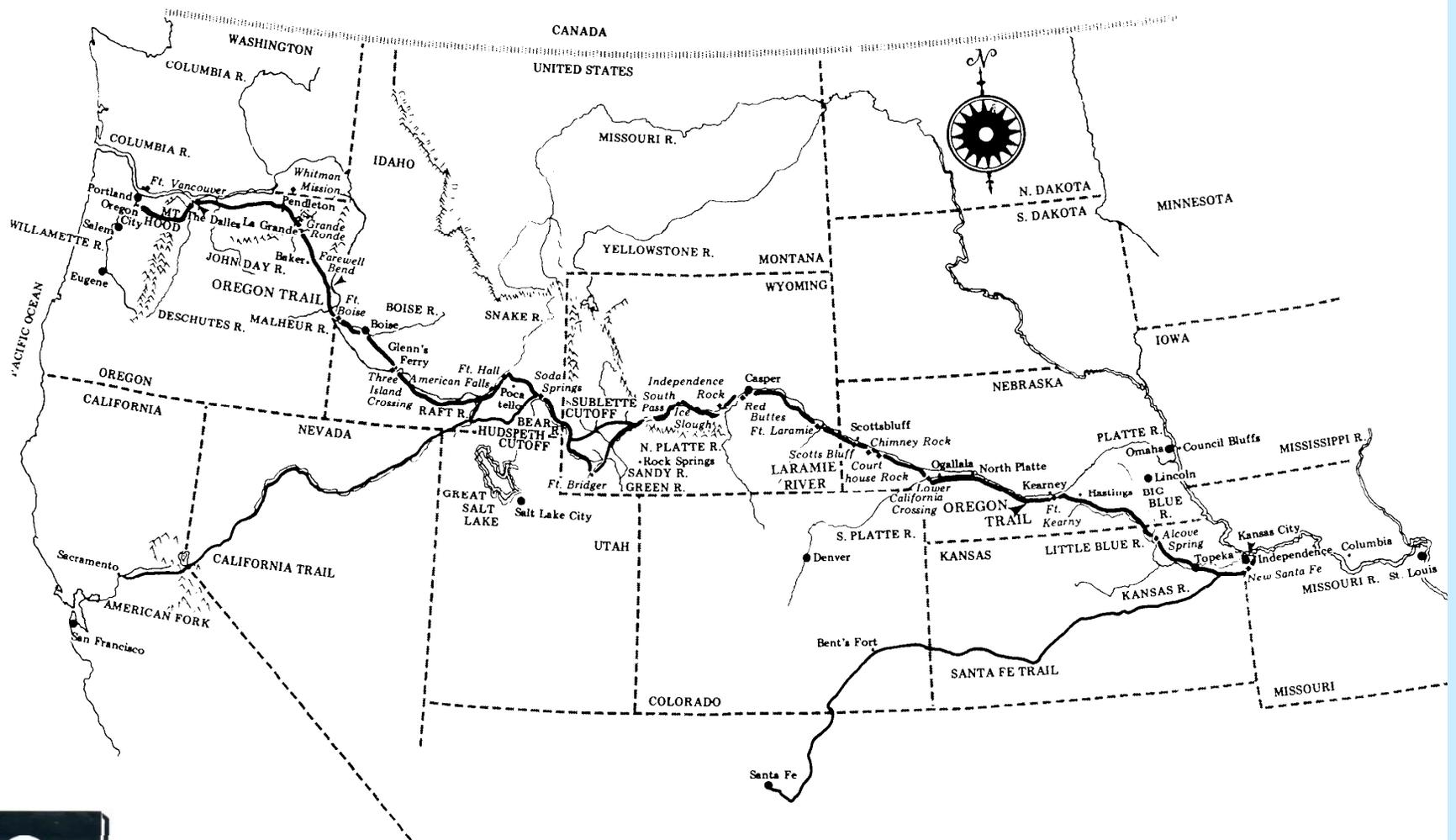
SOUTH PASS, WY AND CHIMNEY ROCK, NE





OCTA'S HISTORIC TRAIL RESOURCE

OREGON AND CALIFORNIA NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAILS



Reference: Haines, "Historic Sites Along the Oregon Trail"



GUERNSEY RUTS, WYOMING



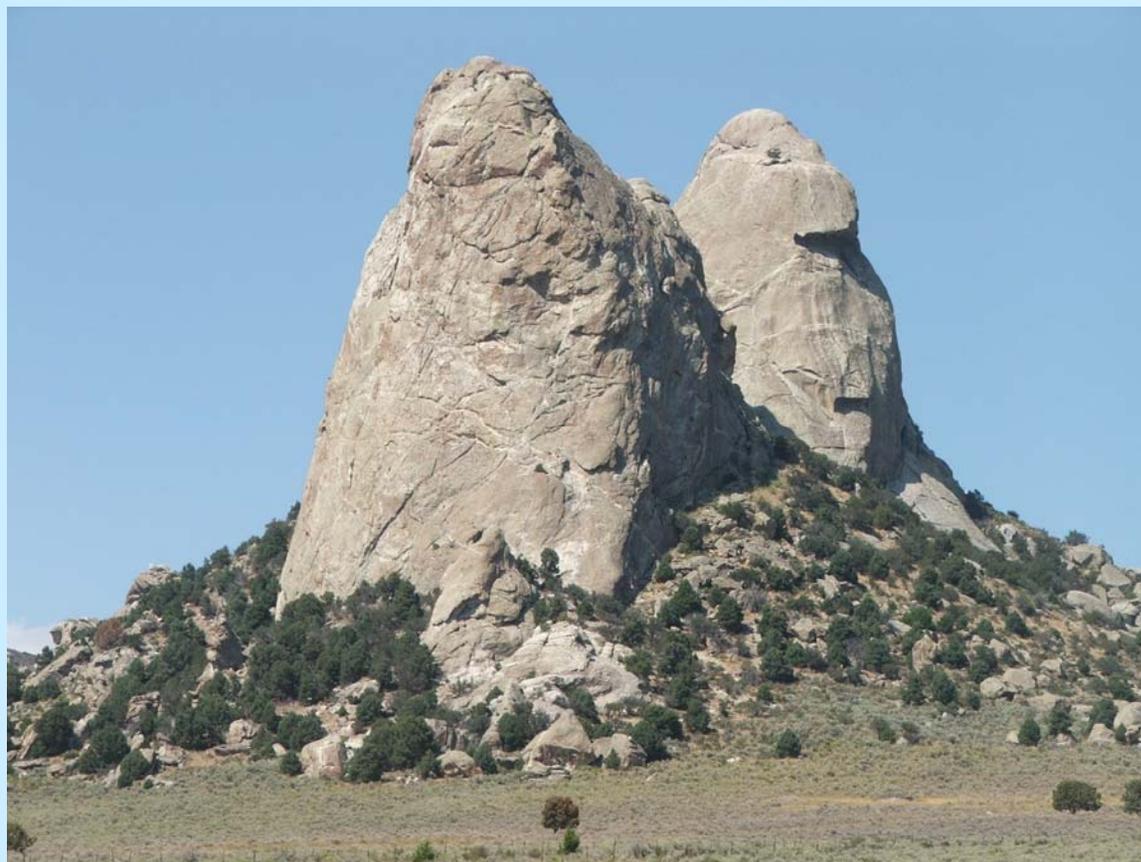
MET Class 1



CITY OF ROCKS NATIONAL HISTORIC RESERVE, IDAHO EMIGRANT CAMPGROUND ON THE CALIFORNIA NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL

OCTA Activities:

- Creation of NHR
- Climbing restrictions on Twin Sisters (only)
- Land Acquisition with NPS and the Conservation Fund





PROBABLE EMIGRANT CAMP GROUND NEAR SOUTH PASS, WYOMING





WYOMING ENERGY DEVELOPMENT



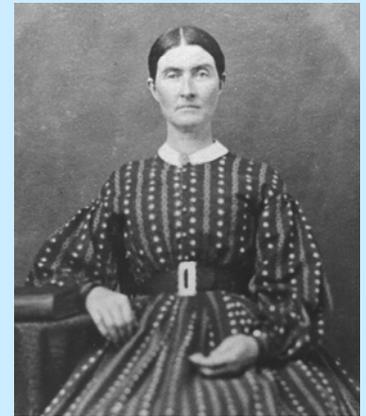
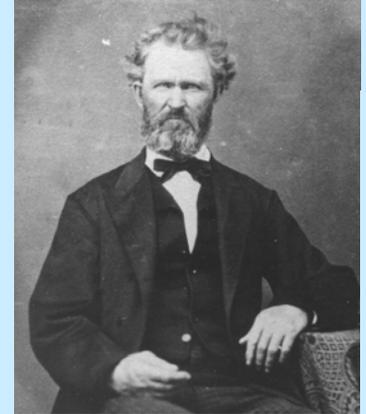


OREGON WIND FARMS



Along the Oregon Trail in Morrow County, OR. Mt. Hood in the background.
Photo by Stafford Hazelett.

SOUTH PASS, WYOMING





CHALLENGES

- Apathy
- Energy development policies (wind, oil and gas)
- Urban growth (homes, highways, etc.)
- Agriculture
- Industrialization
- And ...



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STEP 1- COMMITMENT

Obtain the commitment of your historic trail organizations to trail preservation.

- Does an historic resource exist and what is its nature?
- Is historic preservation a priority for your organization?



Preservation Policy

OCTA hereby affirms its commitment to protect the emigrant trails. Furthermore, OCTA is committed to work with government agencies and private interests to seek solutions considering the interests of all involved parties. Where reasonable compromise is not attainable or established procedures are not followed, OCTA may take appropriate legal steps.

OCTA's expectation is that high potential sites and segments, as defined in the trails management plans, will be protected to the maximum degree possible. Mitigation shall include use of alternate sites away from the trails, careful routing of roads and pipelines, and minimization of visual impacts over the widest possible area. Development activities must include a plan for restoration of the site to its original state after activities cease.

Adopted by OCTA National Board, August 14, 2001 Casper, WY

STEP 1- COMMITMENT



Summary: OCTA's Preservation Policy

- Commitment to trail preservation
- Cooperative efforts to find solutions
- Willing to take legal action
- Focus on best-preserved sites and segments
- Require mitigation for loss of trail and setting*
- Require restoration and reclamation*

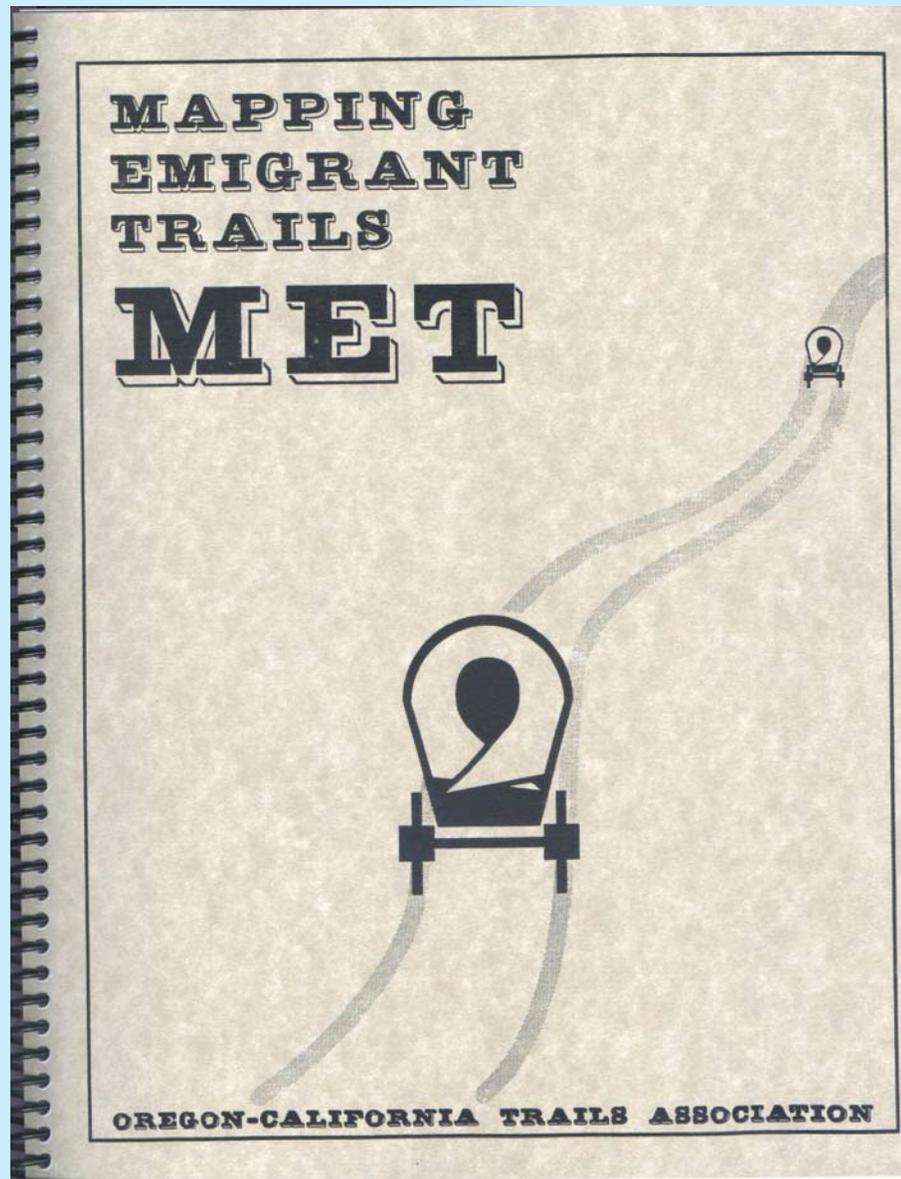
* Usually only possible when a federal undertaking is involved.

STEP 1- COMMITMENT



STEP 2- DOCUMENTATION

- Document the trail resource
 - Find
 - Document/Map
 - Assessment (classification)
 - Ownership



Created by:
Don Buck
Andy Hammond
David Johnson
Tom Hunt
John Maloney

STEP 2- DOCUMENTATION



STEP 3 - PRIORITIZATION

- Prioritize remaining trail resources
 - Where to focus efforts
 - Classification
 - Contributing versus non-contributing segments (Class 1, 2 and 3)
 - National Register nominations



TRAIL CLASSIFICATIONS (MET GUIDE)

- Class 1: Unaltered Trail
- Class 2: Used Trail
- Class 3: Verified Trail (but non-existent)
- Class 4: Altered Trail (impacts by man, not nature)
- Class 5: Approximate Trail

STEP 3- PRIORITIZATION



EXAMPLE TRAIL CLASSIFICATIONS

Class 2 –
Used Trail

Class 1 –
Unaltered
swale

Big Sandy, WY



STEP 3- PRIORITIZATION



EXAMPLE TRAIL CLASSIFICATIONS

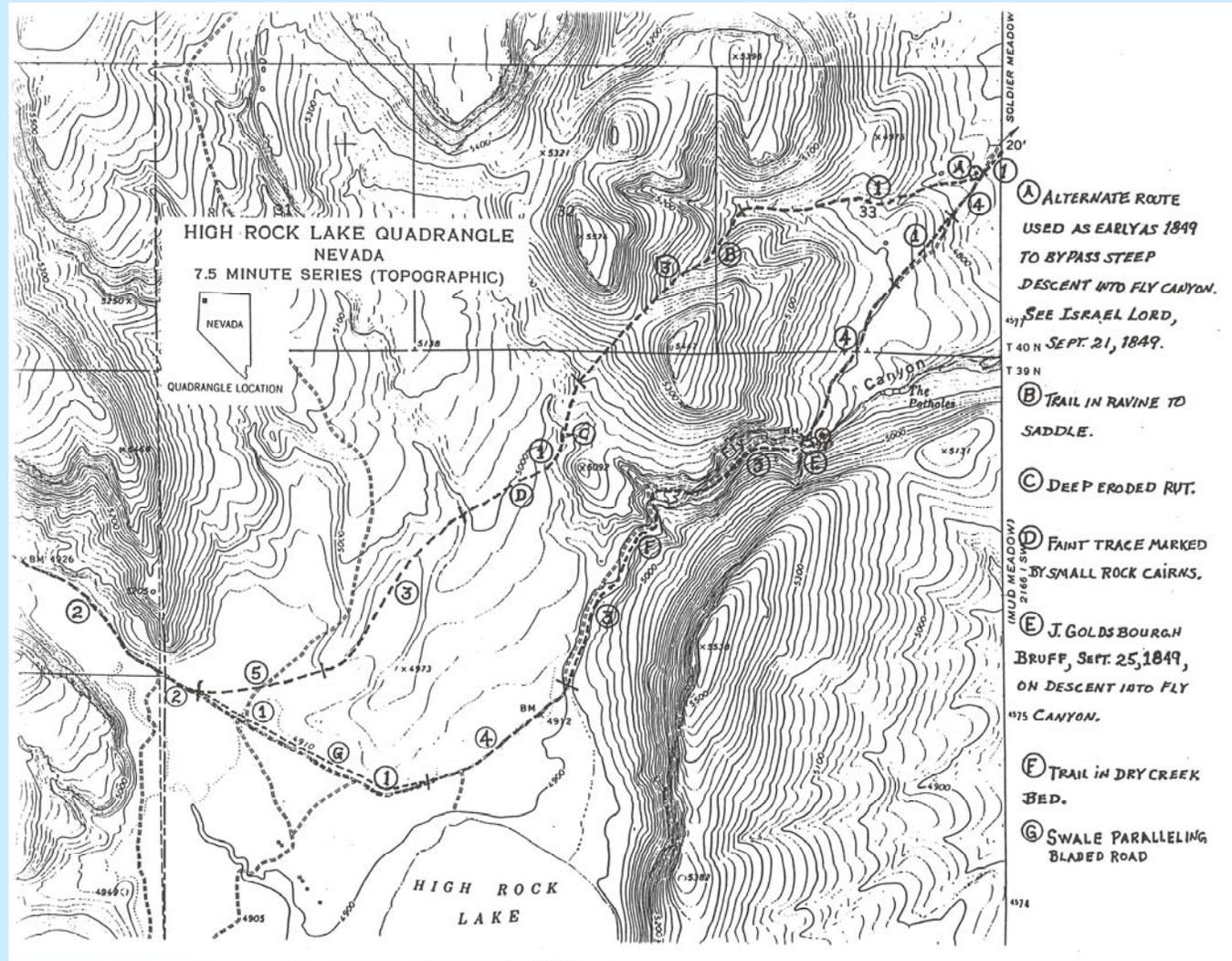
Class 1



Photo by Jim McGill
STEP 3- PRIORITIZATION



SAMPLE MAPPING PRODUCT USING MET GUIDE



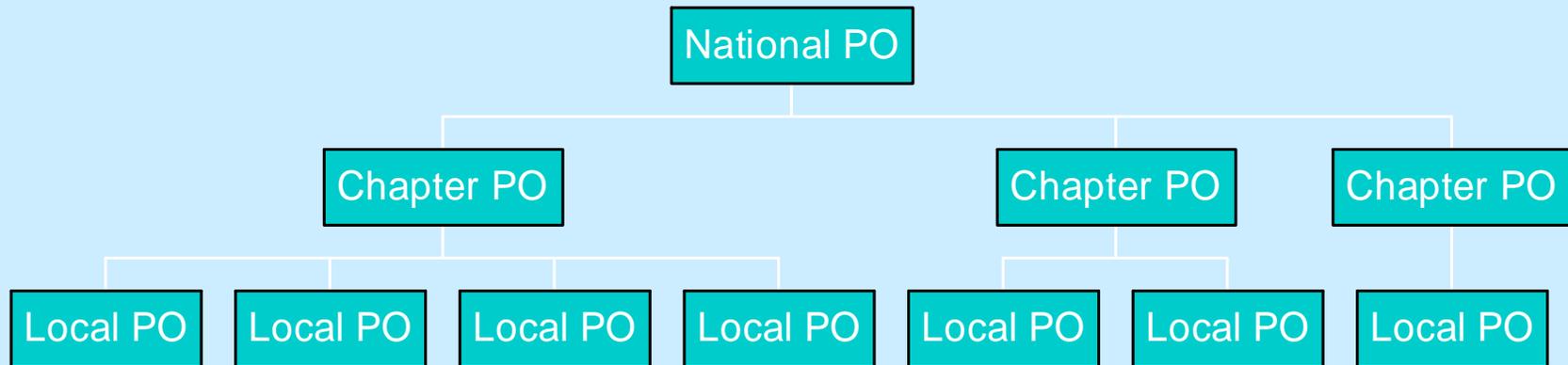


STEP 4 – PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

- Organize continuing activities
 - Mapping, marking and monitoring
 - Train volunteers
 - Implement program
 - Evaluate progress
 - Tours and treks (education)
 - Archival research



PRESERVATION ORGANIZATION



PO – Preservation Officer

STEP 4- PROGRAMS



OCTA'S PRESERVATION TRAINING

- Challenge cost-share grant from the NPS.
- Two day program
 - Classroom lectures and exercises
 - Field work
- Components
 - Mapping
 - Marking
 - Monitoring

STEP 4- PROGRAMS



STEP 5 - PARTNERSHIPS

- Develop partnerships along the trail
 - Organizations with coincident interests
 - State and local historic societies
 - Other trail organizations
 - Local, state and federal agencies

Meeker Centennial 1906-2006

- OCTA
- Ezra Meeker Historical Society
- National Park Service
- North Platte Valley Museum
- Chimney Rock Historic Site
- Landowners





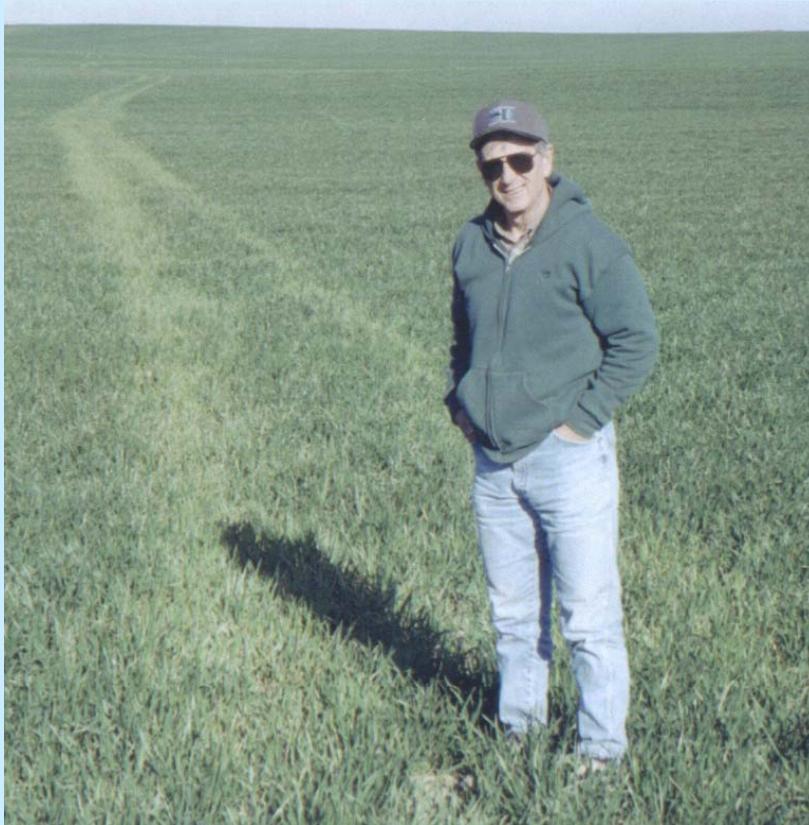
STEP 6 – GOVERNMENT CONTACTS

- Establish contacts with relevant governmental organizations
 - Federal agency owner (BLM, NPS, USFS, FWS, etc.)
 - State Historic Preservation Officer
 - Local government
 - And ...



STEP 7 – PRIVATE LANDOWNERS

- Establish working relationships with private landowners.



- One-on-one contacts
- Non-threatening
- Mutual education



STEP 8 – LAND USE DECISIONS

- Participate in land use processes and decisions
 - Planning commissions and other local government agencies
 - State planning and regulatory agencies
 - Federal
 - Environmental Impact Statements
 - Resource Management Plans
 - Leasing and permitting actions



STEP 9 – LAND/EASEMENT ACQUISITION

- Acquire property or establish easements or land use restrictions



FERNLEY SAND SWALES
CALIFORNIA NATIONAL
HISTORIC TRAIL
FERNLEY, NV

- Development threatened
- Easement held by BLM
- Maintenance by OCTA's CA-NV chapter
- Central Pacific Railroad grade also present





STEP 10 – PUBLIC SUPPORT

- Gain support through a public information program
 - General education (speaker's bureau, etc.)
 - Preservation advocacy
 - Legislative advocacy



FUTURE PNTS ACTIONS (?)

- **Each organization should discuss the unique preservation needs of that organization within the context of the ten-step strategy outlined in this paper.**
- **Based upon that discussion, obtain the “organizational commitment” to trail preservation by the appropriate governing body. All or some aspects of this strategy may not be appropriate to certain trails.**
- **Prepare a plan or discussion paper for presentation at the next PNTS meeting or workshop highlighting preservation issues and plans specific to your trail. Issues might include:**
 - **A vision of the preserved trail.**
 - **Issues unique to your trail.**
 - **Preservation goals**
 - **Strategies/methods to achieve the preservation goals that fit your organization**
 - **Additional resources, personnel, expertise needed to implement a plan**

OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION

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