

W. G. B.

AGENDA COVER MEMORANDUM

AGENDA DATE: June 2, 2004

TO: LANE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

FROM: Don Hampton, Chair, Economic Development Standing Committee

PRESENTED BY: Peter Thurston, Community and Economic Development Coordinator

AGENDA ITEM: ORDER/RESOLUTION IN THE MATTER OF RECOGNIZING AND DECLARING NATIONAL TRAILS DAY ON JUNE 5, 2004 AND SUPPORTING PASSAGE OF THE PIONEER NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAILS STUDIES ACT (HR 1051)

I. MOTION

IT IS MOVED THAT THE ORDER/RESOLUTION BE ADOPTED IN THE MATTER OF RECOGNIZING AND DECLARING NATIONAL TRAILS DAY ON JUNE 5, 2004 AND SUPPORTING PASSAGE OF THE PIONEER NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAILS STUDIES ACT (HR 1051)

II. ISSUE OR PROBLEM

Shall Lane County recognize and declare June 5, 2004 to be National Trails Day and support passage of the Pioneer National Historic Trails Studies Act (HR 1051) by the United States Congress?

III. DISCUSSION

- A. Background. One of the first economic development actions taken by Lane County after it was established in 1851 was to contract, in conjunction with Linn and Benton Counties, to hire a road survey/builder to find a route across the Cascade Mountains for pioneers to come directly to the southern Willamette Valley. This became known as the Free Emigrant Road (FER). As described in Attachments B and C, this route offered pioneer families a tariff-free alternative way to come across Oregon and populate the southern Willamette Valley. Part of the FER route through the wilderness passed through what are now the communities of Oakridge and Lowell to Eugene.

The Oregon-California Trails Association (OCTA) is a non-profit organization that promotes the recognition and preservation of significant historical trails and branch trails that contributed to the migration to the west in the mid-1800s. OCTA has been

working for over four years to identify and study for further designation the trails and branch trails listed in Attachment A, the Pioneer National Historic Trails Studies Act. Among these trail listings, at 5A (c) (5), is the Free Emigrant Road, leading into Lane County.

The Free Emigrant Road is not an established and functioning road, at any point, by today's road standards. In most places it is no longer visible. In a few locations there are wagon tracks or stretches through the forest where it appears trees were removed and trees were blazed to show the route. In many cases, the only evidence is artifacts, such as square-nails, horseshoes, and wagon parts, found by trail hunters. There has been an active volunteer trail hunting group over the past 10 to 15 years, and much of the route has been located. East of the Cascades there are stretches where some of the FER is still evident. West of the summit the only specific FER remnants are at the highest elevations, on National Forest land.

- B. Analysis. There is a wide range of issues to consider in this action for recognition of National Trails Day and a request for the National Parks Service to study designation of the FER for historic trail designation. The first question of whether to declare June 5th as National Trails Day is not controversial. Lane County was populated by people traveling on the Oregon Trail, Applegate Trail, and the many other branch routes listed in Attachment A. One option is to adopt a resolution only proclaiming June 5, 2004 National Trails Day.

Other issues or questions that have to do with the impact of listing the FER as a national historic trail are less easily addressed. These questions have to do with potential impact on private property owners, possible affects on highway/road construction, and whether designation will adversely affect Lane County government. Here are some of the answers to questions along this line:

1) What is the status of the Free Emigrant Road? It is a route over which pioneers traveled in covered wagons the 1850s. Improvements to the route were limited and have almost disappeared. Trail hunters are working to locate the path across the Cascade Range by survey of the landscape and by locating artifacts, following blazes on trees, and other indications. The FER enters Lane County at the crest of the Cascades at Emigrant Pass, near Summit Lake. It descends on National Forest lands past Rock Pile Lake and Indigo Springs into Oakridge, Lowell, and finally Eugene. As indicated on the map (Attachment C), made available by the Oakridge Historical Museum, there is a celebration of the 1853 wagon train each year in Greenwaters Park, in Oakridge. There also is a Dexter, Lowell, Pleasant Hill Oregon Pioneer Reunion planned for August 14, 2004 in Elijah Bristow State Park.

2) What is the exact location of the FER? Most of the actual FER route ("the road") in Lane County has been obliterated by logging, farming, and development over the past 150 years. There has been an active trail hunting group over the past ten to fifteen

years. Much of the route across the Cascades was located and marked by descendants of FER and Boy Scouts in the early 1900s.

3) Who maintains the FER? The Oregon California Trail Association (OCTA), local forest service officials and volunteer trail hunters are exploring sections of the trail, particularly near the Cascade summit, where sign of the trail still exist. The FER has been the subject of Forest Service Passport In Time project over the past 3 years. The primary objective is to place trail markers at trail heads, along the FER route on public lands, and put historic markers at highway rest areas near the route.

4) What are the implications and limitation of the FER being included in the National Trail system? If FER is accepted into the trail system, then the route would appear on the National Parks Service maps of historic trails. According to an OCTA representative, this does not interfere with private property rights. Much of the route is across Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service lands. The Forest Service is currently assisting in coordination of information about the FER route.

5) What are the cost implications to Lane County? The proposed legislation (HR1051) authorizes study by the National Parks Service of whether the listed trails should become part of the recognized historic trail system. This is a federal activity and cost.

6) Is there a revenue stream or grants made available when a trail is recognized in the National Trail system? Yes. Funds would become available to match local efforts to mark the route where the property owner gives permission.

Part of Lane County's early history is directly tied to the development of a road that would provide pioneers a direct route to this region. The FER contributed significantly in the 1850s to increase of the population and development of the local economy. Many of the families that settled here in the mid-1800s are still part of the Lane County community.

Identification and recognition of the Free Emigrant Road will contribute to tourism activities and add to Lane County's room tax receipts when visitors to the area increase because of events such as the Oakridge Historical Museum annual Free Emigrant Road pioneer descendants gathering and the Pioneer Reunion planned in the Dexter/Lowell area.

If the above issues raise questions of concern, then the Resolution/Order may be limited to only announcing National Trails Day, and not specifically advocate for study adding the FER to the National Historic Trails system. There appears to be a critical time period, while this Congress is in session, for the study legislation to be enacted. Linn and Benton counties are considering a similar resolutions supporting recognition of the Free Emigrant Road.

C. Alternatives/Options.

The Board may:

- 1) Approve the ORDER/RESOLUTION announcing recognition of Nation Trails Day on June 5th and supporting passage of the Pioneer National Historic Trails Studies Act, or
- 2) Decide only to recognize National Trails Day and not advocate for study of the Free Emigrant Road to join the National Historic Trails system, or
- 3) Decide not to pass the ORDER/RESOLUTION.

D. Recommendation

Number 1 is recommended, passage of the Order/Resolution, notification of the Oregon delegation and key Congressional members of this action, and release of a news release to the media announcing National Trails Day and support for the Pioneer National Historic Trails Studies Act.

E. Timing. Nation Trails Day is June 5th. Action by Congress is recommended by the Oregon Historic Trails Advisory Council and other trail system proponents to pass the Pioneer National Historic Trails Studies Act before Congress recesses this year.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION/FOLLOW-UP

Upon approval of the Board, the Oregon delegation and key Congressional members will be notified of this action and a news release will be sent to the media announcing National Trails Day and support for the Pioneer National Historic Trails Studies Act.

ATTACHMENTS

ORDER/RESOLUTION

A – HR 1051 – Pioneer National Historic Trails Studies Act

B – Text on Free Emigrant Road Plaque

C – Map of FER from Oakridge Historical Museum

IN THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, LANE COUNTY, OREGON

ORDER/RESOLUTION NO.) IN THE MATTER OF RECOGNIZING AND
) DECLARING NATIONAL TRAILS DAY ON
) JUNE 5, 2004 AND SUPPORTING PASSAGE OF
) THE PIONEER NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAILS
) STUDIES ACT (HR 1051)

WHEREAS, promoting the Free Emigrant Road, from the Oregon Trail in eastern Oregon across central Oregon into Lane County, was one of the first economic development activities promoted by Lane, Linn, and Benton Counties to increase the population of the lower Willamette Valley in the mid-1800s, and

WHEREAS, the Free Emigrant Road is a branch off of the Oregon Trail which is part of the recognized National Historic Trails system, and

WHEREAS, the State of Oregon recognizes the Free Emigrant Road among several branch trails of the Oregon Trail as important historic trails equal in importance to the Oregon Trail, Applegate Trail, Lewis & Clark Trail, and others, and

WHEREAS, the Oregon Historic Trails Advisory Council supports official recognition of the Free Emigrant Road and the Meek Cutoff, and

WHEREAS, the Oregon-California Trails Association and its Northwest Chapter encourage the designation of the Free Emigrant Road, Meek Cutoff, and other equally deserving trail routes into the National Historic Trail system, and

WHEREAS, recognition of historic trails contributes to the tourism attractions and economic benefits derived from an enhanced visitor and tourist industry, and

WHEREAS, the National Park Service recommends study leading to inclusion of the Free Emigrant Road and other trail routes into the National Historic Trail system, NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT:

RESOLVED that June 5, 2004 shall be recognized and declared as National Trails Day.

ORDERED that Lane County supports federal efforts to have the Free Emigrant Road and other equally deserving trail routes added into the National Historic Trail system, and

ORDERED that the Oregon Congressional delegation and other federal officials shall be notified of the importance of including the Free Emigrant Road, and other equally deserving trail routes listed in the Pioneer National Historic Trails Studies Act (HR1051) in the National Historic Trail system.

Signed this 2nd day of June, 2004.

Bobby Green Sr., Chair
LANE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

APPROVED AS TO FORM

Date 5/24/04 Lane County
James J. Allen
OFFICE OF LEGAL COUNSEL

108th CONGRESS
1st Session
H. R. 1051

To amend the National Trails System Act to require the Secretary of the Interior to update the feasibility and suitability studies of four national historic trails, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

March 4, 2003

Mr. BEREUTER introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Resources

A BILL

To amend the National Trails System Act to require the Secretary of the Interior to update the feasibility and suitability studies of four national historic trails, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the 'Pioneer National Historic Trails Studies Act'.

SEC. 2. REVISION OF FEASIBILITY AND SUITABILITY STUDIES OF EXISTING NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAILS.

The National Trails System Act is amended by inserting after section 5 (16 U.S.C. 1244) the following new section:

'SEC. 5A. REVISION OF FEASIBILITY AND SUITABILITY STUDIES OF EXISTING TRAILS FOR POSSIBLE TRAIL EXPANSION.

'(a) DEFINITIONS- In this section:

'(1) The term 'route' includes a trail segment commonly known as a cutoff.

'(2) The term 'shared route' means a route that was a segment of more than one historic trail, including a route shared with an existing national historic trail.

'(b) GENERAL RULES-

`(1) STUDY REQUIREMENTS AND OBJECTIVES- The study requirements and objectives specified in section 5(b) shall apply to a study required by this section.

`(2) COMPLETION AND SUBMISSION OF STUDY- Not later than three complete fiscal years after the date of the enactment of this section, the Secretary shall complete and submit to Congress the studies required by subsections (c) through (g). In the case of a study added to this section after that date, the study shall be completed and submitted to Congress not later than three complete fiscal years after the date of the enactment of the law adding the study to this section.

`(c) OREGON NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL- The Secretary of the Interior shall undertake a study of certain routes of the Oregon Trail, as generally depicted on the map entitled `Western Emigrant Trails 1830/1870' and dated 1991/1993, and such other routes of the Oregon Trail that the Secretary considers appropriate, to determine the feasibility and suitability of designation of one or more of the routes as components of the Oregon National Historic Trail. The routes to be studied under this subsection include the following:

- `(1) Whitman Mission route.
- `(2) Upper Columbia River.
- `(3) Cowlitz River route.
- `(4) Meek cutoff.
- `(5) Free Emigrant Road. —
- `(6) North Alternate Oregon Trail.
- `(7) Goodale's cutoff.
- `(8) North Side alternate route.
- `(9) Cutoff to Barlow Road.
- `(10) Naches Pass Trail.

`(d) PONY EXPRESS NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL- The Secretary of the Interior shall undertake a study of the approximately 20-mile southern alternative route of the Pony Express Trail from Wathena, Kansas, to Troy, Kansas, and such other routes of the Pony Express Trail that the Secretary considers appropriate, to determine the feasibility and suitability of designation of one or more of the routes as components of the Pony Express National Historic Trail.

`(e) CALIFORNIA NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL- The Secretary of the Interior shall undertake a study of certain Missouri Valley, central, and western routes of the California Trail, as generally depicted on the map entitled `Western Emigrant Trails 1830/1870' and dated 1991/1993, and such other and shared Missouri Valley, central, and western routes that the Secretary considers appropriate, to determine the feasibility and suitability of designation of one or more of the routes as components of the California National Historic Trail. The routes to be studied under this subsection include the following:

- `(1) MISSOURI VALLEY ROUTES-
 - `(A) Blue Mills-Independence Road.
 - `(B) Westport Landing Road.
 - `(C) Westport-Lawrence Road.
 - `(D) Fort Leavenworth-Blue River route.

- `(E) Road to Amazonia.
- `(F) Union Ferry Route.
- `(G) Old Wyoming-Nebraska City cutoff.
- `(H) Lower Plattsmouth Route.
- `(I) Lower Bellevue Route.
- `(J) Woodbury cutoff.
- `(K) Blue Ridge cutoff.
- `(L) Westport Road.
- `(M) Gum Springs-Fort Leavenworth route.
- `(N) Atchison/Independence Creek routes.
- `(O) Fort Leavenworth-Kansas River route.
- `(P) Nebraska City cutoff routes.
- `(Q) Minersville-Nebraska City Road.
- `(R) Upper Plattsmouth route.
- `(S) Upper Bellevue route.
- `(2) CENTRAL ROUTES-
 - `(A) Cherokee Trail, including splits.
 - `(B) Weber Canyon route of Hastings cutoff.
 - `(C) Bishop Creek cutoff.
 - `(D) McAuley cutoff.
 - `(E) Diamond Springs cutoff.
 - `(F) Secret Pass.
 - `(G) Greenhorn cutoff.
 - `(H) Central Overland Trail.
- `(3) WESTERN ROUTES-
 - `(A) Bidwell-Bartleson route.
 - `(B) Georgetown/Dagget Pass Trail.
 - `(C) Big Trees Road.
 - `(D) Grizzly Flat cutoff.
 - `(E) Nevada City Road.
 - `(F) Yreka Trail.
 - `(G) Henness Pass route.
 - `(H) Johnson cutoff.
 - `(I) Luther Pass Trail.
 - `(J) Volcano Road.
 - `(K) Sacramento-Coloma Wagon Road.
 - `(L) Burnett cutoff.
 - `(M) Placer County Road to Auburn.

`(f) MORMON PIONEER NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL- The Secretary of the Interior shall undertake a study of certain routes of the Mormon Pioneer Trail, as generally depicted on the map entitled 'Western Emigrant Trails 1830/1870' and dated 1991/1993, and such other routes of the Mormon Pioneer Trail that the Secretary considers appropriate, to determine the feasibility and suitability of designation of one or more of the routes as components of the Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail. The routes to be studied under this subsection include the following:

- `(1) 1846 Subsequent routes A and B (Lucas and Clarke Counties, Iowa).
- `(2) 1856-57 Handcart route (Iowa City to Council Bluffs).
- `(3) Keokuk route (Iowa).
- `(4) 1847 Alternative Elkhorn and Loup River Crossings in Nebraska.
- `(5) Fort Leavenworth Road, including the Ox Bow route and alternates in Kansas and Missouri (Oregon and California Trail routes used by Mormon emigrants).
- `(6) 1850 Golden Pass Road in Utah.

`(g) SHARED CALIFORNIA AND OREGON TRAIL ROUTES- The Secretary of the Interior shall undertake a study of certain shared routes of the California Trail and Oregon Trail, as generally depicted on the map entitled 'Western Emigrant Trails 1830/1870' and dated 1991/1993, and such other shared routes that the Secretary considers appropriate, to determine the feasibility and suitability of designation of one or more of the routes as shared components of the California National Historic Trail and the Oregon National Historic Trail. The routes to be studied under this subsection include the following:

- `(1) St. Joe Road.
- `(2) Council Bluffs Road.
- `(3) Sublette cutoff.
- `(4) Applegate route.
- `(5) Old Fort Kearny Road (Oxbow Trail).
- `(6) Childs cutoff.
- `(7) Raft River to Applegate.'

END



FREE EMIGRANT ROAD



In the summer of 1852, a party of road viewers from the Willamette Valley followed Kalapuya, Molala, and Klamath Indian trails to reach the Deschutes River and continued east, backtracking the 1845 route of Stephen Meek. In 1853 road commissioners met with Elijah Elliott, who was going to the Snake River to meet his family. They promised to have the cutoff completed and persuaded him to lead the wagon train and follow the new route later that year.

The group of 1853 emigrants who followed part of the Meek Cutoff had already faced many perils of the eastern Oregon desert. They had traveled for weeks from the Snake River near present Nyssa, losing stock and possessions, until finally finding their way to the Deschutes River near what is now Bend. With abundant water and feed for their stock, they were ready for the last push over the Cascade Mountains and an end to their six-month ordeal. This cutoff from the Meek Cutoff of the Oregon Trail was later called the Free Emigrant Road because no toll was charged.

The Elijah Elliott wagon train, with 215 wagons, 615 men, and 412 women and children, was the first to follow this new route located by the road viewers. In October 1853, they crossed Crescent Creek and headed for Diamond Peak on their way to the

Funded by

THE OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION

and the Northwest Chapter of OCTA

October 2003

Willamette Valley. Those emigrants and their livestock suffered great hardships. One woman died near the Deschutes River and Nancy (Prosser) Petty died near Oakridge.

The Free Emigrant Road was funded, located, and built by the citizens of Lane, Linn, and Benton Counties to promote settlement of the upper Willamette Valley. However, when the Elliott wagon train traveled through this forest in late October, they found little that resembled a road. Some blazes on trees and a path of fallen trees were their only guides over the mountains.

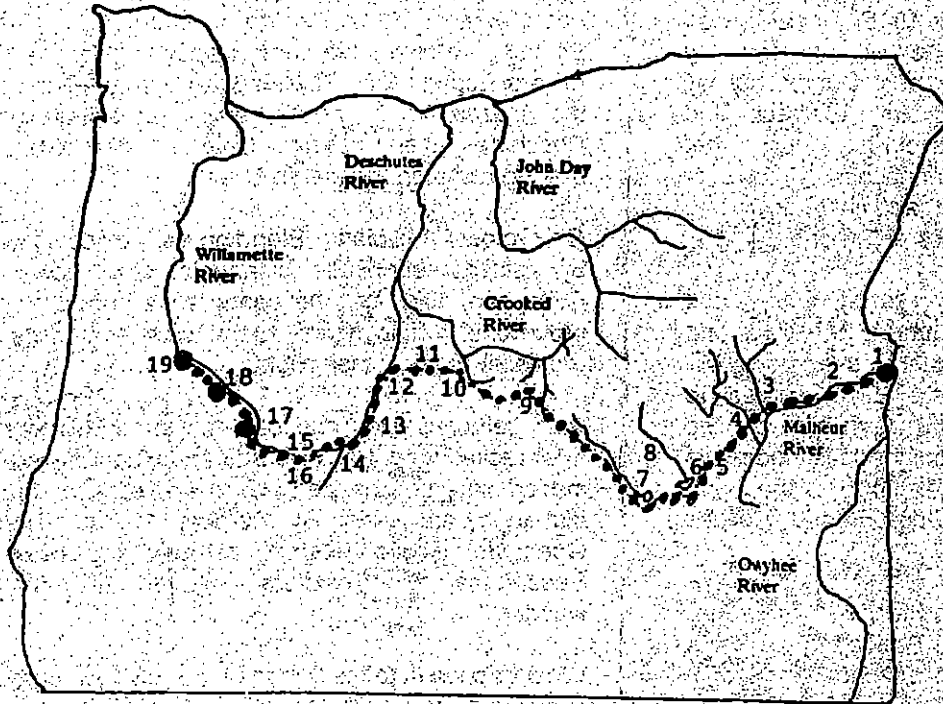
With supplies low and the threat of winter snow, they sent riders ahead to seek help. As the wagon train neared the summit, Willamette Valley citizens loaded with 20,000 pounds of food, other supplies, and 290 head of fresh stock met them and guided them to safety. When the emigrants of the Elliott wagon train finally arrived and found homes, they increased the population of the upper Willamette Valley by 50 percent, insuring the economic success of Eugene and the surrounding area.

This trail was used again in 1854 by the William Macy wagon train and continued to be used for the next ten years. The route of this road can still be seen on the Oldenberg Trail and the Windy Lakes Trail.



This is a part of your American heritage. Honor it, protect it, preserve it for your children.
Oregon-California Trails Association, P. O. Box 1019, Independence, MO 64051-0519

Attachment C



1. Vale
2. Harper
3. Beulah
4. Drewsey
5. Crane
6. Malheur Lake
7. Harney Lake
8. Burns
9. Riley
10. Millican
11. Alfalfa
12. Bend
13. LaPine
14. Crescent
15. Odell and Crescent Lakes
16. Diamond Peak
17. Oakridge
18. Lowell
19. Eugene

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT

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OAKRIDGE, OREGON, 97463

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Detailed Maps & Videos Available

Tours & Celebration-Second Full
Weekend in July