

End of an Era for the Southwest Chapter New beginning for the Southern Trails Chapter

Following an election of new officers in Phoenix Arizona on April 21, 2009 a new course was set for the then named Southwest Chapter.

The new Chapter leadership set for themselves 6 new goals that will redefine the Chapter going forward. "We believe that in accomplishing these goals we will go a long way toward restoring new interest and participation in the Chapter by existing members, as well as, encourage new members to join us" stated Albert Eddins newly elected Chapter President.

Goal 1 – A new name and historical new look.

The first stated goal is to give the Chapter a new name and a historical new look.

A request was made to OCTA President Glenn Harrison and the board of directors for approval to change the name of the Chapter. Verbal approval was granted to change the Chapters name from "Oregon-California Trails Association, Southwest Chapter" to its new name "**Southern Trails Chapter of the Oregon-California Trails Association**".

At the election meeting in Phoenix a motion was made, seconded and the vote was unanimous in favor of the name change. Formal approval will take place at the next OCTA board meeting at the convention in Loveland, Colorado August 18, 2009.



Goal 2 -To increase contact with membership.

At present the only real communication with the membership is through our “Desert Tracks” newsletter. As great a newsletter as “Desert Tracks” is and as much as everyone loves it, we have clearly heard from members that they want more from the Chapter.

The first step to accomplish this goal will be to hold regularly scheduled Chapter meetings. Beginning this year four Chapter meetings per year - summer, fall, winter and spring - will be held, at rotating historical locations across the Chapter territory.

The first four have been scheduled with details and exact dates to follow. They are:

August 19, 2009 at Loveland, Colorado – To coincide with the OCTA convention so members attending the convention can also attend a Chapter meeting.

November 2009 at Fort Mojave, Arizona

February 2010 at Tubac, Arizona

May 2010 Silver City, New Mexico

Other activities and local outings to historic trail sites will be planned at various times and locations throughout the year.

In addition to regularly scheduled meetings members will also receive more communication by both print and electronic media.

Print wise we will, of course, continue the very popular “**Desert Tracks**” newsletter. We also plan to introduce a new electronically generated newsletter named “**Wagon Ruts**” containing current Chapter and OCTA news, upcoming events and activities, and other timely information.

Goal 3 - New Chapter Website

Not only will a new website reinforce goal 2 with members but it also allows us to reach out to everyone interested in Historic Trails world-wide.

We feel very fortunate to have Tom Jonas, historian and cartographer, well known for his mapping skills, join us as our Webmaster. Tom and an advisory panel, that we are very thankful for, have now completed the design and construction of the site. To complete the site we now need to add valuable and interesting content to it. All members are encouraged to give us their input on what they would like to see put on the site and to send in items they think other members would be interested in.

Our website **southern-trails.org** is something we can all use to disseminate information and to communicate with each other for many years to come at very little cost.

Goal 4 - Create programs and activities for all members.

In order to appeal to the interests of all members' future programs and activities will be equally balanced across three major categories important to all trail enthusiasts, Preservation, Education, and Identification.

Chapter activity planners will work to place equal focus on these three major themes when planning Chapter activities.

Here are some examples of the type of activities we will be looking at.

1. Preservation

- Educating local clubs, groups and schools on historical trails in local area
- Working with Local, State, and Federal agencies
- Supporting National OCTA preservation agenda

2. Educational programs

- Workshops
- Symposia
- Bus tours to historic locations

3. Identification

- On the ground trail identification and mapping
- Trail outings to historical trail sites
- Training programs to teach mapping techniques

We will search for new and innovative programs and activities that will capture member's interest.

Goal 5 Establish a chapter archive.

The first step in obtaining this goal will be to create the position of Chapter Historian to the Chapter leadership team.

We are very happy that Rose Ann Tompkins has agreed to accept this new position and will serve as our new Chapter Historian.

Past, current, and future Chapter records, mapping data and documents will be collected.

In time all data will be archived and placed in an appropriate secure depository, to be preserved for all future generations of trail lovers.

Goal 6 National Historic Trail Status for the Southern Trail

We believe the time has come to initiate the work to obtain National Historical Trail Designation for the Southern Trail. Other trails, no more important in settling the West, now have Historic Trail status. It's now time for the Southern Trail.

This is a long term goal that will require the support and help of many Chapter and OCTA members to obtain. A number of Chapter members have already done a lot of work, for a long time, hoping this might happen someday. All members can now join in and help them finish the work and share in the joy.

With OCTA's support, partnering with other interested historic trail associations, and all members of the Southern Trails Chapter behind it, we can make this happen.

In addition to accomplishing these goals the Chapter leadership recognizes several critical business issues that must be addressed, including need for growth in membership, a new dues structure, completing the Chapter leadership roster, establishing a Chapter board of directors to include a director from each State within the Chapter.

If you would like to become more active in the Chapter by joining our leadership team or volunteering to help with activities, please let us know. It's a great place to put your talents to work on something you obviously enjoy and associate with people of similar interests.