

**PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT**

MEETING DATE: August 5, 2014

AGENDA ITEM NUMBER: 3A

APPLICANT: Tyler Torres, Eagle Scout Candidate
Vern L. Krahn, Senior Park Planner

REQUEST: Discussion only regarding a presentation by Tyler Torres, Eagle Scout candidate, on his California Trail Interpretative Signage Project.

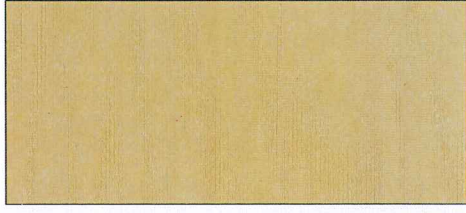
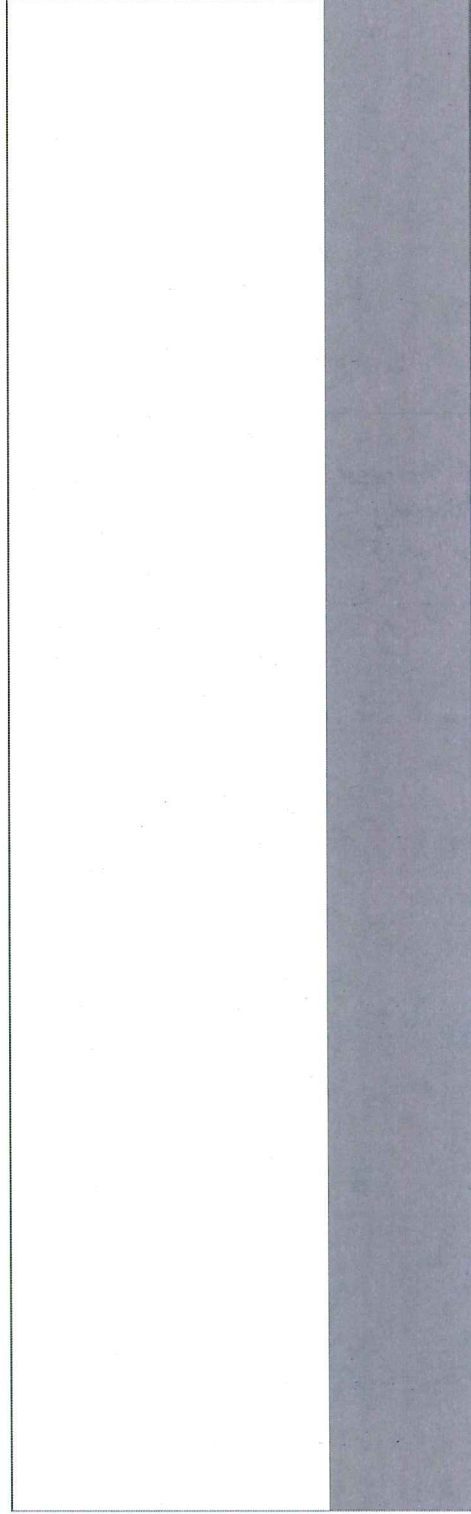
GENERAL DISCUSSION: Our department has been working with the Nevada Division of State Parks to install interpretative signage for the California Trail in Carson City. The Nevada Division of State Parks, in conjunction with the State of California has been installing California Trail interpretative signage along the entire trail route throughout Nevada and California.

The California Trail had its beginnings at several points along the Missouri River and included various routes across the Great Basin and over the Sierra Nevada mountains into California. The idea behind the interpretative signage is for the public to learn more about what happened to these emigrants as they traveled across the Great Basin.

Mr. Torres will be at this meeting to discuss his project (Exhibit A), review his research paper (Exhibit B), and trail route map (Exhibit C) with the Commission. He is currently working with staff to identify a park site for the interpretative signage along the trail's route through Carson City. After the site has been selected, Mr. Torres will design and construct the site for the interpretative signage.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: This is a presentation and discussion only item. No formal action can be taken by the Commission at this time.

CALIFORNIA OVERLAND
EMIGRANT TRAIL SIGNAGE
PROJECT



EMIGRANT TRAIL

- Migrants traveling East to West.
- During the Mid-19th Century.
- Manifest Destiny, Persecuted Mormons, Land from Mexican-American War.
- Disease, dehydration, injury, starvation, weather.
- Missouri to California through Carson City.

NEED FOR SIGNS

- Commemorate the trials of pioneers.
- Opening the Western United States to expansion.
- Connection to the past.
- Reflect on development of the land.
- Inspiration for future pioneers.
- Through Carson City—part of the history.

Carson City

The Carson River Route

The earliest emigrants on the California Trail crossed the Sierra Nevada range by following the Carson River valley. Leaving from California, they traveled across the plains, crossed the mountains, and followed the Carson River valley to the gold fields of California. Many emigrants traveled in the winter months, but the Carson River valley was the only place where they could find food and shelter. The Carson River valley was the only place where they could find food and shelter. The Carson River valley was the only place where they could find food and shelter.

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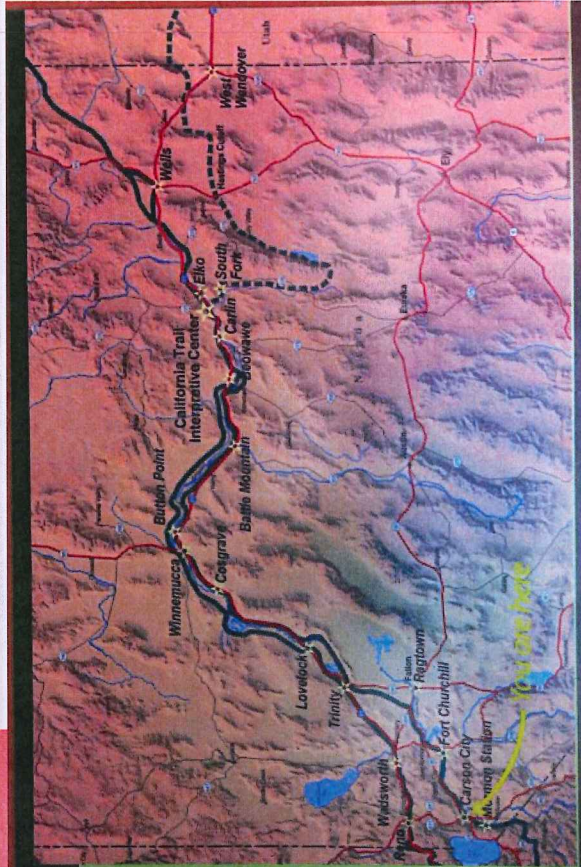
"Our whole camp is quieter, obscene and improper language not heard just because a woman is in the camp... This is the refining influence of women, without society men almost become dispensable, men care not for men. This body is very cheerful and odds much to our camp."
 - Public C. Hooper, 1849

On the Trail Today

About Your Journey...

Whether you're a hiker, a cyclist, or you're just looking for a great experience to see the California Trail, you're going to have a great experience to see the California Trail. Whether you're a hiker, a cyclist, or you're just looking for a great experience to see the California Trail, you're going to have a great experience to see the California Trail.

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You're Invited!

There are many California Trail sites like this one, spread across Nevada. They are marked on this map. As you stop at these sites, you will learn more about what happened to these emigrants as they traveled across the Great Basin. Be sure to visit the California Trail Interpretive Center just west of Elko, Nevada.

WHO AND WHEN?

- Eagle Scout Project.
- Boy Scout Troops
- In-N-Out Associates.
- National Honors Society (High School).
- Late August-Early September.

LOCATION

- Finding the exact route.
- Late timing.
- Pictures and journals for precision.
- Dayton to Eagle Valley (current Carson City) through Mormon Station (current Genoa).
- Exact location in progress with Nevada Historical Society and independent research.

THE PLAN

- Precise map of trail.
- Exact placement of site.
- Acquire materials (pavers, sand, cement, etc.) and tools (hammer, screwdriver, level, etc.)
- Plan two days for work and recruit members.
- Execution.
- Evaluation and report.

QUESTIONS?

Exhibit B

The California Overland Emigrant Trail Project

Tyler Torres

The Emigrant Trails through the Western United States existed essentially as a means for migrants from the Eastern United States to explore and settle the West. Several factors served as motivators for Western expansion, especially available land from the Mexican-American War, ideals of Manifest Destiny, the Gold Rush around 1849, plentiful resources, and religious excursions by Mormon followers. Beginning in various locations in the mid-East, the most common points beginning the trails were in Missouri and Iowa, though people from many other states participated in the migration. Near Nebraska the different starting points converged and formed a single, more solid trail. These trails continue through Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska, Wyoming, Oregon, Nevada and through to California. Throughout the journey, there were many obstacles such as disease, dehydration, injury, starvation, and bad traveling conditions. These hazards led to the death of roughly one tenth of the migrants traveling on the trails.

Nevada especially was an important part of the trail, where it diverged into two main separate trails: the Carson Trail and the Truckee Trail. Both trails, part of the California Trail, passed over the 40 Mile Desert, “forty memorable miles of bottomless sand into which the coach wheels sunk from six inches to a foot” (Fey) to the Carson River. Following this river, the migrants passed through Ragtown—appropriately named due to the rugged terrain and ragged appearance of both the town and the migrants traversing it. From Ragtown, the trail turns west and goes in a southwest direction for roughly 80 miles through the Carson Valley by the Sierra Mountains. Later, it crosses Hope Valley and to Hangtown, or modern day Placerville.

Specifically, the Carson Trail moved along the Carson River with a short detour to Soda Lake for fresh water, then into Ragtown, seven miles west of current Fallon. Moving westward, the trail passed through Dayton, Nevada and Moundhouse near the Virginia and Truckee (V&T) Railroad then into Eagle Valley, the current Carson City. Remaining at the base of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, the trail leads southwest along the current Main Street and down current Highway 395, then around current Genoa Lane to a more permanent settlement, the Mormon Station in Genoa. From there, the trail progressed through to Hangtown, or Placerville, California.

The trail itself, therefore, led straight through Eagle Valley and modern Carson City. This trail holds the memory of some of the first western American emigrants, the sacrifices they made and the history of the land itself. It is reasonable, then, to acknowledge that a small area commemorating this trail along its remembered path to remind us of the rich history of our nation and memorable experiences of those migrants traveling westward is necessary. Though the exact location of this memorial has not been officially selected as of yet, work is currently being done to locate a specific spot for this site. Remembering the past of this city holds value to each citizen, and this memorial will provide not only an insight to the past, but also a great example of motivation and perseverance for the future.

Sources

Curran, Harold. "Fearful Crossing." Curran, Harold. *Fearful Crossing*. Las Vegas: Nevada Publications, 1982. 177. Print.

Fey, Marshall R. "Emigrant Shadows." Fey, Marshall R., Joe King and Jack Lepisto. *Emigrant Shadows*. Virginia City: Western Trails Research Association, 2002. 110-175. Print.

Harris, Everett W. "Emigrants Passed This Way." Harris, Everett W. *Emigrants Passed This Way*. Virginia City: Western Trails Research Association, 2002. 118. Print.

Jonas, Tom. *Trails West--Marking the Emigrant Trails to California*. 2010. Web. 24 July 2014.

