

**Scotts Bluff National Monument  
Oregon Trail Ruts Landscape Study  
and Environmental Assessment ■ 100% Report**

**1   Appendix A. Scoping Notices**

- 2   A July 25, 2010, article in the Gering, Nebraska Star Herald newspaper (see attached)  
3   publicized an open house on July 27, 2010 at which the proposed alternatives, including the  
4   preferred alternative, would be presented  
5  
6   Public comments provided during the July 27, 2010 public house were recorded and are  
7   summarized in the attached meeting summary.





## News

### Monument seeks to preserve Oregon Trail wagon ruts

By: KATIE BRADSHAW, Staff Reporter

Published: Sunday, July 25, 2010 12:33 AM CDT

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The line of three wagons in front of Scotts Bluff National Monument is obvious to most visitors. What may not be so obvious is the landscape feature just west of the wagons.

The many pioneer wagons that traveled single file through Mitchell Pass on the Oregon Trail eroded the rock they passed over. The deep roadbed impressed upon the landscape by the pioneers' westward migration can still be seen. According to the monument website, the feature is technically called a "swale," but many people refer to it as "wagon ruts."

The National Park Service is beginning a study of the ruts that will be used to guide their long-term maintenance and upkeep. Monument staff is soliciting public input on the planning process at an open house at the Gering Civic Center on Tuesday, July 27, from 6 to 8 p.m.

At the beginning of the open house, the project team will present an introduction to the trail ruts area and the objectives of the study. Much of the work will include locating the ruts using visual study, historic photographs and aerial photography; determining the trail ruts' physical condition; and identifying the best methods for protecting the ruts.

The team will also explore opportunities for improving recreation in the area and new ways of making the ruts evident to visitors.

Monument superintendent Ken Mabery said that at some times of year the ruts are very visible because of the darker grass growing on the trail, but for the most part, the public doesn't recognize them.

The public can stop by any time during the two-hour open house to provide comment.

Mabery said that the public's ideas on how to protect and enjoy the ruts are needed to ensure that nothing gets overlooked.

"You never know where the next 'best idea' will come from," he said.

The monument has received funding specifically for the study, which will be completed by Mundus Bishop Design and ERO of Denver.

Mabery said that he would like to see the wagon ruts in Roubidoux Pass addressed as well, but the current study is focused on the monument.



Just west of the Conestoga wagon in front of Scotts Bluff National Monument, the roadbed of wagon ruts from the Oregon Trail overland migration may still be seen by those who know where to look. The National Park Service is seeking input on a maintenance plan for the ruts. Photo by Katie Bradshaw

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## MEETING SUMMARY

Project: Scotts Bluff National Monument

Date: July 27, 2010

Project No: 0928

Subject: Monument Meeting and  
Public Open House  
Oregon Trail Ruts  
Landscape

Present: Ken Mabery – Superintendent (SCBL)

Robert Manasek –Resource Management Specialist (SCBL)

Marla McEnaney – National Park Service (NPS) – *via  
conference call*

2 pages

Mary Powell – ERO Resources Corporation (ERO) - *via  
conference call*

Patrick Mundus – Mundus Bishop Design, Inc. (MBD)

Robyn Bartling – Mundus Bishop Design, Inc. (MBD)

### Discussion:

A meeting with Monument and Regional staff was held to discuss next steps and the public open house.

1. Open House Public Notification – SCBL notified the public through an add on the front page of the local newspaper, which satisfies the scoping requirements for the project. This information will be included in the 95% Report.
2. Park Visitor survey – SCBL provides surveys to visitors of the monument. The feedback is general and is not specific to the Oregon Trail Ruts. No additional visitor survey information is available.
3. Maintenance – The following is additional maintenance discussed related to the Oregon Trail Ruts.
  - The culverts in Character Area A were installed in the 1990s
  - Cyclical maintenance includes filling in pot holes in pedestrian trail portions
4. Long Distance Trail/Vehicular Experience – SCBL would like to see the Oregon Trail Ruts highlighted where they would have crossed the Old Oregon Trail County Road.
  - It was discussed that including treatment related to the vehicular experience would be out of the scope of the project, but this information would be included in the management summary of the report.
5. Preferred Alternative – The preferred alternative based on the meeting with monument staff and the public open house is Alternative #2 Trail Rehabilitation (Existing Alignment). The following are other items to consider for the preferred alternative.
  - Consider more use by pedestrians.
  - Maintenance by use – wagon programmed use
  - Consider more interpretation to the west

6. Project Phasing – Recommendations for project phasing will be included in the 95% report with Class C Cost Estimates. Potential projects include:
- Trail rehabilitation Character Area A
  - Visitor opportunities
  - Trail documentation
7. Public Open House – The public open house was held at Gering Civic Center on July 27, 2010, 6:00-8:00 PM. The following are those in attendance at the public open house. Comments sheets provided by those in attendance are attached to this meeting summary.

Name	Address	Telephone Number	E-mail Address
Todd Crawford	416 Valley View Drive. #600, Scotts Bluff, NE	308-633-6333	<a href="mailto:Todd.crawford@mail.house.gov">Todd.crawford@mail.house.gov</a>
Loren Pospisil	PO Box 365 Bayard	308-586-2581	<a href="mailto:Howard.kg@gmail.com">Howard.kg@gmail.com</a>
Barb Netherland	230842 Highland Rd, Gering, NE	308-632-8186	<a href="mailto:bgneth@charter.net">bgneth@charter.net</a>
Terry Steinacher	PO Box 304, Crawford, NE 69339	308-665-2918	Not provided
John Williams	515 West 23 <sup>rd</sup> St, Scotts Bluff, NE	308-632-4972	Not provided
Jan Williams	515 West 23 <sup>rd</sup> St, Scotts Bluff, NE	308-632-4972	Not provided

Attachments

(2) Comment sheets

end

Project Name: SCOTT'S BLUFF - OREGON TRAIL RUTS

Date: 7.27.10

Project Number:

Subject: PUBLIC MEETING 7.27.10

## COMMENT SHEET

Where the existing public path is, the trail remnants are already compromised.

Therefore I think you can be more flexible with solutions.

Trail remnants that have not been compromised should be left alone. I heard some discussion about. I heard some discussion about highlighting them or altering them to make them more visible. I think that is a mistake. When you compare a 1940 picture with a 2010 picture one is tempted to want it back to "the way it was", forgetting that 1940 was NOT the way it was but rather 80 years AFTER the way it was. Be very very careful if you do this.

Back to the existing public path, the boardwalk idea ~~which~~ would be an anachorism and be a maintenance problem as well.

NAME (OPTIONAL) Loren Pospisil

ADDRESS (OPTIONAL)



Project Name: SCOTTS BLUFF - OREGON TRAIL RUTS Date: 7.27.10  
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Subject: PUBLIC MEETING 7.27.10

## COMMENT SHEET

Ruts that are products of erosion (swales) should be left as is.

Foot paths ~~used~~ should be maintained

If there are ruts showing definitive two wagon wheel marks, should be preserved if possible

NAME (OPTIONAL)

Kerla Howard

ADDRESS (OPTIONAL)