



NEZ PERCE NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL

Progress Report

Winter 2010



Administrator's Corner

Even though it is impossible to predict what the future holds for the [Nez Perce National Historic Trail](#) (NPNHT) in the next 25 to 50 or more years, it is certainly possible to influence the future. "What is the biggest issue facing the NPNHT into the future?" Some new challenges the Trail may face include the shifting of cultural norms on what preservation means; invasive species; climate change; aboriginal land rights; water rights; pollution; and increasing demands for energy, water, raw materials; and recreational land use. Questions we may all be thinking include, will the NPNHT be accompanied by a tram or bikeway in certain locations? Will the lynx disappear? Will the buffalo return? Will axes and campfires be banned? Will picnic tables and Wi-Fi be provided?

The biggest threat to the work accomplished to restore and preserve the NPNHT is complacency. As we move forward in our efforts to promote and preserve this important legacy we must engage the next generation for certainly, the next century holds great opportunities, promise, great challenge, and many changes.

We should challenge ourselves to think of ways in which kids involved in organized team sports can be environmentally aware that the soil, air, and water they play on and in is part of the natural world that surrounds them. We should strive to help them understand how important everyone's history is to our future. The NPNHT is a landscape of history that touches all of our lives.

It seems everyone is concerned about youth obesity, health, emotional stability, performance in school, and connections with nature to provide opportunities for recreation and tourism as a specific objective in forest management plans of public agencies and private landowners. One way we can influence our future for the Trail is to improve the strategic effectiveness of outdoor youth programs and educate them in outdoor ethics.

I draw my strength from each of you as I take on the responsibilities of Trail Administrator. With your help, we will build together a more adaptive and innovative organization that can better respond to the challenges we will face in our second century.

Join me as we honor the people who have made our Trail what it is today.

"What is the biggest issue facing the NPNHT into the future?" There is concern out there that the NPNHT will become irrelevant to a society that is disconnected from nature and history. We need to help all Americans, especially young people, discover a personal connection and encourage them to become lasting stewards to our Trail. I believe every American will relate to and cherish the Trail if given the chance to connect, whether by existing or future technology or by visiting this American treasure.



L-R: Sandi McFarland, Jamie Schwartz, John Favro and Margaret Gorski, pause for a photo during a discussion and hike along the NPNHT.

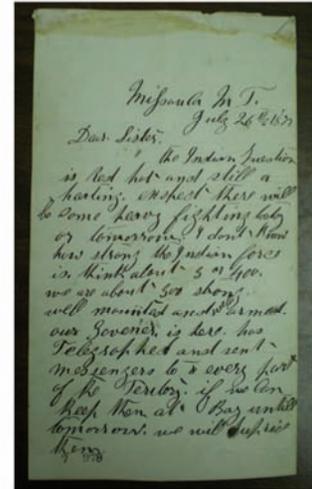
Sandi McFarland
Administrator NPNHT

Letter Tells One Man's Fort Fizzle Story

In July of 1877 Fort Missoula was only a few months old. The fort was established at the request of area settlers who feared Indian attacks. That summer US Army troops under the command of Capt. Charles Rawn, and a number of citizen volunteers from Missoula, prepared to stop members of the non-treaty Nez Perce as they made their way from Idaho into Western Montana. So in late July, 32 year old John H. Hammer, a Civil War veteran and one of the Missoula volunteers, feared the worst as he penned a letter to his sister. "Dear Sister, The Indian question is red hot and still a heating, expect there will be some heavy fighting today or tomorrow," he wrote.

A copy of Mr. Hammer's letter made its way to the Missoula County archives where it remained until being discovered by Marcia Porter, Missoula County Records Manager. She showed the letter to Kermit Edmonds, a local historian, who recognized the importance of the letter and its connection to the events of the Nez Perce war of 1877.

The tone of the letter reads in such a manner that Mr. Hammer expected to die in the fighting and so he wrote this letter to his sister leaving all his earthly possessions to her. In fact he did not die that summer but was thrown from a horse in November of 1879 and died as a result of injuries for that accident. Thanks to Marcia and Kermit for bringing this letter out of the archives and into the light.



Letter from John H. Hammer to his sister, Sophia A. Smith, written July 26, 1877.

Learn more about events at Ft. Fizzle by visiting the Lolo National Forest's website: <http://fs.usda.gov/lolo> and typing *Fort Fizzle* into the search feature.

Update Regarding Trail Visitor Map

A new map of the Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail will be available for sale this spring. Trail staff have put the final arrangements in place and will be sending it to the printer in early March. This map will provide visitors with details on a number of activities along the 1,170 mile trail, which was designated as a National Historic Trail by Congress in 1986.

This map, with an improved color scheme, replaces the last Nez Perce National Historic Trail map which was last revised in 1995.

The map also features the photography of Northwest artist Harold Pfeiffer.

When it arrives from the printer the map will be available for sale at Forest Service and National Park Service offices and online through [Discover Your Northwest](#), the [National Forest Store](#), and the USGS store.



2010 Desk Planner

The annual desk planner arrived from the printer in mid-January. Trail staff have distributed all 5000 copies to partners and visitor centers along the NPNHT.

The popular planner features images taken along the Trail by Harold Pfeiffer, along with historic quotes connected to the Nez Perce and the Nez Perce National Historic Trail.

Special thanks to Joe Guarisco who helped with layout and design and Wilfred "Scotty" Scott from the [Nez Perce Tribe](#) who provided valuable information.

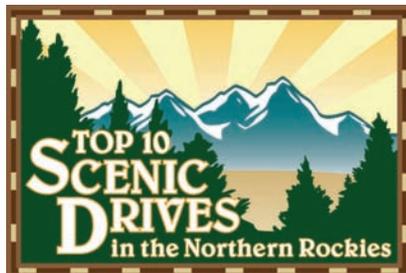


Top 10 Scenic Drives Launches New Web Site

The Top 10 Scenic Drives in the Northern Rockies has launched its new Web site (www.drivethetop10.com) to provide domestic and international visitors with an organized, central online tool. The Top 10 Scenic Drives was recently unveiled as North America's newest destination for travelers who seek an authentic experience with scenic beauty, wildlife, and recreation that delivers a connection with the environment, American Indian cultures, and North American history.

The new online tool features a personality and drive matcher, which pairs users with specific Top 10 Scenic Drives based on their interests.

(cont. on right)



June Event to Commemorate the Nez Perce Ride to Freedom in Canada

The Nez Perce Ride to Freedom is an annual event sponsored by the Appaloosa Horse Club of Canada (ApHCC) and hosted by the Regional Hot Spots Appaloosa Horse Club. It is a family trail ride commemorating the Nez Perce's epic journey of 1877 into Canada after the battle at Bear Paw. Although many Chiefs surrendered and died for the freedom not seen, other Nez Perce did manage to escape into Canada. Those who made it Canada included Chief White Bird and members of his band.

The dates for the 2010 Nez Perce Ride to Freedom are June 25-29, 2010. The event culminates with a ride into Fort Walsh. Guest speakers will make presentations related to Nez Perce history and the journey from Bear Paw to Canada, as well as the history of the [Cypress Hills](#) area in southwestern Saskatchewan.

Guests will also be able to participate in an interpretive tour of the Fort, which will include lunch and education programs by the Park staff. If you would like additional information about the Nez Perce Ride to Freedom, please contact the [Hotspots Regional Appaloosa Club](#) or Gail Praharenka, Chair of the Nez Perce Ride to Freedom at rencogeneral@hotmail.com

(see photos from the 2009 Ride on page 8)

(Top Ten Drives Cont.)

The Top 10 Scenic Drives in the Northern Rockies includes five U.S. states (Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Washington, and Oregon) and two Canadian provinces (British Columbia and Alberta). It is composed of four All-American Roads; 14 National Parks, Monuments and Recreation Areas; and four connecting Historic Trails, including the Nez Perce National Historic Trail.

The Top 10 Scenic Drives in the Northern Rockies is made up of more than 100 key partners, including state, provincial, regional, local, and tribal organizations, as well as state and federal agencies and private businesses, organizations, and individuals. For more information about The Top 10 Scenic Drives in the Northern Rockies, visit the website at www.drivethetop10.com.



Sandi McFarland Tread Trainer Superstar

From the Fall/Winter 2009 Edition of the Tread Lightly Trainer News

Sandi McFarland has a big job. She educates the public on the history and stewardship of one of the longest and most historically significant trails in the country, the Nez Perce National Historic Trail. Sandi has done an exceptional job of taking full advantage of Tread Lightly!'s tools and messages as she works to reach the motorized, mechanized, and human powered recreationists on the trail. That's why she has been highlighted as our newest Tread Trainer Superstar.

Sandi spreads the [Tread Lightly!](#) message throughout the trail's educational programs. This includes the website and all of the historical education pieces for both youth and adults.

She has also used Tread Trainer games such as "Web of Life," "They Look Rugged But..." and "The Ethics Game" to reach underserved and at-risk youth groups. As a Nez Perce Tribal member, the trail is very special to her.

"The biggest value for me on the trail is to educate the general public to become stewards of our public lands," says Sandi. "These are the same values our Nez Perce Tribal Members have been taught throughout time."



Sandi presenting certificates to Tread Lightly students who attended a workshop at a recent conference in Missoula, Mont.



UPCOMING 2010 Events:

- February 20-25 -- Hike the Hill: American Hiking Society, Washington, DC
- April 24 -- Red Heart Band Memorial, Vancouver, WA
- March 13 — Nez Perce Trail Foundation Board of Directors meeting, Nespelam, WA
- May 12-14-- PNTS Historic Trails Workshop, San Antonio, TX
- June 19 -- White Bird Battle Memorial, White Bird, ID
- June 18, 19, 20 -- Chief Joseph & Warriors Memorial Powwow, Lapwai, ID
- June 25-29 — Nez Perce Ride to Freedom, Fort Walsh, SK. Canada
- August 7 -- Big Hole Battle Memorial, Wisdom, MT
- August 13, 14, 15 -- Chief Looking Glass Days & Powwow, Kamiah, ID
- October 2 -- Bear's Paw Battle Memorial, Chinook, MT
- November 14-17-- National Trails Symposium: Chattanooga, TN





News From the National Forests:

Bitterroot National Forest

2009 was an important year for users of Nez Perce NHT. The Appaloosa Horse Club of American used the trail to connect from the Bitterroot Valley to the Big Hole following the route used by the Nez Perce in 1877.

Staff from the [Forest](#) worked with the local Backcountry Horsemen of America (BCHA) chapter, Selway Pintler, to do trail log out work on three miles of trail. During a two-day period in June the trail was cleared and just prior to the Chief Joseph Trail Ride on July 20 crews made a second pass to make sure it was still open and in good shape.

A large portion of this area was burned in 2000 with stand replacement intensity fire, so numerous down trees are common. The trail is marked with Nez Perce (Nee-Mee-Poo) National Historic Trail emblems and staff added a few more to be sure folks wouldn't get disoriented since the trail passes from old road way to single track trail in a few places. The trail clearing limits are seeing lodge pole pine trees sprouting in these areas, obscuring the trail tread places so the emblems become even more important to users who have never traveled this route.

Nick Hazelbaker, from the West Fork Ranger District, met the club as they were riding through on another connector trail to the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest, and they were very appreciative of the work done. An oak sign was erected at the trailhead to give the BCHA chapter credit for their work to make it passable to the 100+ riders who made the trip. The riders had no trouble finding their way through the burn.

Debra Gale and Nick Hazelbaker
Bitterroot National Forest



Crews from the Selway Pintler Wilderness BCH make their way through an area burned in 2000.





News From the National Park Service:

Big Hole National Battlefield Visitor Center to Undergo Major Remodel in 2010

The [Big Hole National Battlefield](#) Visitor Center, located in Southwest Montana near the community of Wisdom, is about to undergo major changes starting later this spring. This is the first major remodel of the facility since it opened in 1968.

The Park will remain open to visitors during the construction and plans to convert one of its housing duplexes into offices for the staff and a visitor contact station. During the remodel work visitors will still be able to view the park orientation film, obtain information, purchase educational materials, visit the battlefield, and interact with Park staff.

The construction period is anticipated to last between 8 and 12 months.

When the remodeled center reopens visitors will notice a number of major improvements.

The roof, which has leaked for many years, is going to be replaced with a cold roof that will not only fix the leak but make the center more energy efficient. Along with the new roof a new entrance to the building will eliminate the dripping water/snow/ice gauntlet that visitors currently have to go through to get inside. The current automatic front doors will also be replaced with new accessible doors.

In addition to all the work on the outside of the center, the inside is getting a makeover too. Brand new exhibits that will tell the story of the Nez Perce War of 1877 in context will be installed sometime in 2010. To protect the facility and exhibits a fire suppression system will also be added to the visitor center.

Park staff is looking forward to having these improvements in place to enhance the visitor experience.

Steve Black
Superintendent
Big Hole National Battlefield



Big Hole National Battlefield visitor center, near Wisdom, Mont., at twilight, Autumn, 2004. Credit: Steve Schmorleitz, www.NationalParkLover.com





News From the National Park Service:

Annual Beadwork Bazaar Held at Nez Perce National Historical Park

On December 5th the annual Beadwork Bazaar was held at the Spalding Visitor Center. Local artists and artisans displayed and sold their artwork and crafts in the Visitor Center lobby. Visitors enjoyed the chance to meet the artists, discuss their work, and pick up a few gifts for the holidays. The bazaar is held each year on the first Saturday of December and has become a very popular event.

Terry O'Halloran
Chief of Interpretation

Park Staff Begin Work on New Film For Nez Perce National Historical Park

The staff at the [Nez Perce National Historical Park](#) recently got word that they have received funding to begin production of a new film for the Park visitor center in Spalding, Ida. This film will replace an outdated media presentation that is the principal public introduction to the Nez Perce people.

Work on development of the script will begin in 2010. This project will be funded 20 percent by fee dollars and for Fiscal Year (FY) 2010 the park has received the first installment of \$150,000. In FY 2011, there will be another installment of \$210,000 for a total of \$360,000 for the film project. The second installment will cover the cost of filming and production. This is very exciting and will provide an opportunity to make something special that we can all be proud of.

We are also at 75 percent in the development stage for the new museum exhibits at Big Hole National Battlefield. This means that Park staff, in conjunction with tribal consultants, has achieved three-quarters of the final exhibit design (i.e. graphics, photos/artwork, text) that will lead to the final package necessary for proceeding to fabrication and installation.

Marc Blackburn
Interpretive Specialist
Nez Perce National Historical Park

Funds Will Help Connect, Improve Trails in National Park System

by [Kurt Repanshek](#)
www.nationalparkstraveler.com

Trails across the country will receive funding for infrastructure needs, promotions, interpretation, and other needs under the National Park Service's just-announced *Connect Trails to Park* grants for 2010.

The grant program, established last year to mark the 40th anniversary of the National Trails System, will provide \$873,000 for projects, according to a Park Service release.

The 17 funded projects restore or improve existing trails and trailhead connections, provide better wayside and interpretive services, encourage innovative educational services, support bridge and trailhead designs, and provide planning services for important trail gateways.

Under this program the Nez Perce National Historical Park, in Spalding, Ida., will receive \$4,500 for volunteer-based interpretation at the Park.

To read [the complete story](#) visit the National Park Traveler website.



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Photos from the 2009 Nez Perce Ride to Freedom in Canada



Photos courtesy of Gail Praharenka



For information on this years ride see the story on page 3 of this report.

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