

NEWS Release BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT OR-038-2013-16
For Immediate Release

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Author of “The Meek Cutoff” to speak at Trail Center

BAKER CITY, Ore. – Brooks Geer Ragen, author of the new book *The Meek Cutoff* will speak at the National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center on Wednesday, August 21 at 1 p.m.

From 2006 to 2011, Ragen and a team of specialists traced the route of the Meek Cutoff through central Oregon, locating wagon ruts, gravesites, and other physical evidence from the most difficult parts of the trail. He will speak about his experiences documenting that route, using surviving journals from members of the 1845 party, maps, and aerial photographs.

The Meek Cutoff from the Oregon Trail was an 1845 event when an estimated 2,500 emigrants left Missouri for the Oregon Territory. About 1,200 emigrants in more than two hundred wagons accepted fur trapper and guide Stephen Meek's offer to lead them on a shortcut. The resulting disaster has become legend, depicted in numerous books and a recent movie.

Those who followed Meek experienced a terrible ordeal. Lost for weeks with little or no water and a shortage of food, the party struggled across the trackless high desert from the Snake River in present-day Idaho to the Deschutes River near Bend, Oregon.

Brooks Geer Ragen is chairman of the board of directors of Manzanita Capital and lives in Seattle, WA. Ragen will be available to sign copies of his book following the talk.

The Trail Center is located five miles east of Baker City, Oregon on State Highway 86. Take Exit 302 from I-84. The Trail Center is currently open 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily. Admission for adults is \$8.00; for seniors it's \$4.50; children 15 and under are admitted for free. Federal passes are accepted. Call (541) 523-1843 for updates on programs and events. For more information about the Trail Center visit:

www.oregontrail.blm.gov

- BLM -

About the BLM: The BLM manages more than 245 million acres of public land, the most of any Federal agency. This land, known as the National System of Public Lands, is primarily located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The BLM also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM's multiple-use mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. In Fiscal Year 2012, activities on public lands generated \$4.6 billion in revenue, much of which was shared with the States where the activities occurred. In addition, public lands contributed more than \$112 billion to the U.S. economy and helped support more than 500,000 jobs.

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