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News Release

BLM Salt Lake Field Office

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Bureau of Land Management, Utah State Historic Preservation Office announce Transcontinental Railroad Projects during anniversary week

WEST VALLEY CITY, Utah — The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in collaboration with the Utah State Historic Preservation Office (Utah SHPO) celebrate the 152nd anniversary of the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad at Promontory Point in Utah by announcing the availability of a self-guided audio tour that follows the 90-mile BLM-managed section of the Transcontinental Railroad Grade in Box Elder County, Utah, as well as the availability of the publication: *Rails East to Ogden: Utah's Transcontinental Railroad Story*. Additionally, BLM and Utah SHPO, in collaboration with the Chinese Railroad Workers Descendants Association, will conclude a weeklong archaeological excavation at the Terrace site on the Transcontinental Railroad Backcountry Byway on May 14.

The excavation project is part of a Passport in Time program, which leverages volunteers to assist federal land managers in historic preservation. A team of volunteers conducted the excavation. This is the first scientific investigation of a railroad town in Utah and the project focuses on the lives and homes of Chinese railroad workers. The excavation coincides with Utah's Archaeology and Historic Preservation Month, Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, and the 152nd anniversary of the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad.

“Bringing the country together at Promontory Point by completing the Transcontinental Railroad played an important role in America’s history; however, we do not often have an opportunity to tell the story of the Chinese workers who constructed the railroad and lived in Utah,” said **BLM Utah State Director Greg Sheehan**. “This excavation project brings history to life and allows the descendants of those workers to connect with their ancestors. I am thrilled to see our agency have the chance to help make this connection.”

The construction of the first Transcontinental Railroad across the United States was a magnificent undertaking, taking years of planning and execution. One of the largest townsites along the Promontory segment of the railroad was Terrace, founded in 1869, and boasting a population of 800-1,000 inhabitants during the late 1880s/early 1890s. The project will expand on previous excavations which provided insights into life at Terrace for the Chinese workers who lived there in the 19th century.

To learn more about the Transcontinental Railroad and see sites, the Travelstoriys audio tour will guide visitors down 90 miles of original hand-constructed Transcontinental Railroad grade, managed as a National Backcountry Byway and located west of the Golden Spike National Historic Park. The audio tour was developed in partnership with the Utah SHPO, can be downloaded on mobile devices through the Travelstoriys app, and is free to all users. Visitors will have the opportunity to pass through ghost towns and see old foundations, earthworks, culverts, and trestles which carried old steam engines, passengers, and western adventurers into new and undiscovered country. Visitors are reminded to adhere to the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 and to not move, take, or destroy any historical artifacts.

“Leveraging this new technology helps to give visitors a deeper understanding and appreciation of this one-of-a-kind resource and landscape, said **State Historic Preservation Officer Chris Merritt**. “The Transcontinental Railroad Backcountry Byway is a national treasure with a colorful history that should be enjoyed by current and future generations.”

“Over the past several years, the BLM and Utah State Historic Preservation Office have seen increased public interest in the Transcontinental Railroad,” said **BLM Salt Lake Field Office Manager Jessica Wade**. “We are thrilled to bring this exciting new opportunity to learn about the railroad grade from archaeologists and historians who have conducted research along this section through the TravelStorys app.”

To listen to the audio tour, download the TravelStorys app on a mobile device through your mobile device’s app store [or on the web](#). Once the app is downloaded, the “Transcontinental Railroad” tour can be found using the magnifying glass icon at the top of the screen. To download, press the little blue download icon on the bottom right of the tour. Due to limited cell phone service along the railroad grade, it is recommended to download the app and tour ahead of time.

In addition to the audio tour, the BLM is also announcing the availability of *Rails East to Ogden: Utah’s Transcontinental Railroad Story*. This publication follows the renowned *Rails East to Promontory* by Raymond and Fike. It includes many elements of the forgotten history of the railroad – including amazing stories of strength, perseverance, and engineering – and the legacy of the railroad workers, many of them Chinese immigrants, who served a pivotal role in completing the railroad and connecting the eastern and western United States.

The backcountry byway is rugged country and without facilities or services. Visitors should have plenty of supplies (gas, water, food, and a spare tire) and let someone know where they are going and when they expect to return when exploring remote public lands.

The publications, application, and other information about the Transcontinental Railroad can be found [on the BLM.gov website](#). For additional information, please contact Acting Assistant Field Manager for Non-renewable Resources Todd Marks at 801-977-4300. Persons who use a telecommunications device for the deaf may call the Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339 to leave a message or question for the above individual. The Federal Relay Service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Replies are provided during normal business hours.

For public domain photos please visit: www.flickr.com/blmutah or <https://bit.ly/3tWLBqx>.

This year, we invite everyone to reimagine your public lands as we celebrate 75 years of the BLM’s stewardship and service to the American people. The BLM manages approximately 245 million acres of public land located primarily in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The BLM also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The agency’s mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of America’s public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

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