



The 2016 Old Spanish Trail Conference July 29-30 Grand Junction Colorado

Welcome to our first newsletter for our 2016 Old Spanish Trail Conference! We'll be sending out news and information about our conference every few weeks between now and mid-July, letting you know about our plans, how to register, special features, and a few previews of our presentations.

PRESENTATION PREVIEW

A few of the interesting, informative, and entertaining presentations for your conference.

CMU Professor Stephen Stern describes two centuries of change on the Old Spanish Trail



How much has the Old Spanish Trail changed over the last 200 years? Have ecosystems been altered? The Old Spanish Trail passes through southwest

Colorado, eastern Utah, and into the Great Basin—a vast area. Describing dominant plants and animals of these areas, including

those that may have been useful to travelers, Dr. Stern will describe changes in the areas after settlement, particularly changes due to grazing, settlement, and the introduction of non-native plant species.

Stephen Stern, PhD, has been faculty at Colorado Mesa University since 2011. He has taught many subject within the field of biology, including general human biology, principles of plant biology, plant systematics, taxonomy of grasses, plant identification, tropical field biology and various research and internship classes.

His primary interest lies in understanding the biodiversity and the evolution of vascular plants through both taxonomic and phylogenetic approaches. His research focuses on the plants genus *Solanum*, which includes the eggplant, potato and tomato. Students in his lab gain experience with DNA extraction, PCR amplification, DNA sequencing and phylogenetic analysis. He also conducts field studies in western Colorado, most notably a BLM-funded plant inventory of the McInnis Canyon National Conservation Area.

He is curator of the Walter Almond Kelley Herbarium at CMU and President of the Colorado Native Plant Society Plateau Chapter. Through the society, he has organized numerous workshops, field trips and events. He is also an online mentor for the Botanical Society of America's Planting Science program. This involves mentoring groups of students online and guiding them through experiments using plants.

Engaging Your Community to Preserve, Protect: Hand-On Strategies that Work

The panel discussion "Engaging Your Community: Protecting the Old Spanish Trail in your area," will provide step-by-step information for how volunteers - including those new to the Old Spanish Trail - can and do make a difference with real-life experiences and expertise. There will be ample time for questions from the audience.

- Educating your community about the significance of the Old Spanish Trail and why it should be protected
- Involving your local media
- Researching on the local level
- Organizing groups
- Outlining clear objectives
- Communicating with local governments
- Understanding the perspective of local officials and planning offices
- Identifying local, state, and regional stakeholders and other interested parties - and bring them to the table
- Learning about resources and tools available on a national level



The panel will include Vicki Felmler, OSTA Colorado Director; Kaye Simonson, Lead Planner for Mesa County; and Jack Prichett, an expert on the trail who has led successful efforts to mitigate the impact of wind and solar energy development in California.

Saturday trip focuses on how river, history, culture merge in unique public park



The Colorado River was essential to early travelers on the Old Spanish Trail, from Ute Natives, to Spanish traders, to fur trappers. In later centuries this area, now known as Las Colonias, was used as a base for the sugar beet industry, employing hundreds of Hispanic and migrant laborers. Those merging histories and cultures are being recognized—and celebrated—in this unique public park that will soon be home to an amphitheater capable of holding 5,000 attendees.

North Branch President Jonathan Carr, who is also the co-author of *The History of Las Colonias Park: Historic Crossroads Along the Riverfront of Grand Junction, Colorado* will be your host for this amazing tour Saturday morning on the 2016 OSTA Conference. Free transportation will be provided from the Clarion to the park courtesy of Grand Valley Transit.

We thank the sponsors and partners of our 2016 OSTA Conference!



Ashley Hall & Associates



Register Now

In Our Next Issue:

We're planning lots of surprises for our Friday field trip, made possible by our Active Trails grant from the National Park Foundation.

We promise—you won't be disappointed.

On the go? Scan our Go-Code on your phone!



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Questions or comments? E-mail us at vicki@ostcolorado.org or call 970-245-8484

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