TRAIL CLASSIFICATIONS: MET METHODOLOGY

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MAPPING EMIGRANT TRAILS (MET) MAPPING TECHNIQUES

HIGH ROCK LAKE QUADRANGLE
NEVADA
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

ALTERNATE ROUTE
USED AS EARLY AS 1841
TO BYPASS STEEP
DESCENT INTO FLY CANON.
SEE ISRAEL LORD,
SEPTEMBER 21, 1849.

TRAIL IN RAVINE TO
SADDLE.

DEEP ERODED RUT

PAINT TRACE MARKS
SMALL ROCK CAIRN.

J. GOLDSBOROUGH
BRUFF, SEPT. 25, 1849,
ON DESCENT INTO FLY
CANYON.

TRAIL IN DRY CREEK
BED.

SWALE PARALLEL TO
BLADER ROAD.

MET Guide after page 22.
TRAIL CLASSIFICATIONS

Class 1: Unaltered Trail
Class 2: Used Trail
Class 3: Verified Trail (but non-existent)
Class 4: Altered Trail
Class 5: Approximate Trail
Class 6: Reconstructed Trail

Updated October 1, 2013
TRAIL CLASSIFICATIONS

Class 1: Unaltered Trail  Symbol: ①

The trail segment retains the essence of its original character and shows no evidence of having been substantially altered by motor vehicles or by modern road improvements. There is visible evidence of the original trail in the form of depressions, ruts, swales, tracks, scarring, vegetative differences, rock alignments along the trailside, and eroded trail features.
CLASS 1 TRAIL – GUERNSEY, WY

Photo by Dave Welch
CLASS 1 TRAILS WEST OF DEVILS GATE, WY

Photo by Randy Wagner
Big Sandy Swales  Class 1 (Class 2 within trail corridor)

Photo by Dave Welch
Class 2: Used Trail

The trail retains the essence of its original character but shows past or present use by motor vehicles, typically as a two-track road overlaying the original wagon trail. There is little or no evidence of having been altered permanently by modern road improvements, such as widening, blading, grading, crowning, or graveling. In forested areas the trail may have been used for logging but still retains elements of its original character.
SOUTH PASS (CLASS 2)

Photo by Dave Welch
TRAIL CLASSIFICATIONS

Class 3: Verified Trail

The trail route is accurately located and verified from written, cartographic, artifact, geomorphic, and/or wagon wheel impact evidence (as rust, grooved, or polished rocks). But due to subsequent weathering, vegetative succession, rodent surface digging, or logging, trail traces will not be visible on the surface. What does remain is a verified trail corridor that has not been directly altered by modern intrusion or development. Typically this includes trails that once passed through forests and meadows, across excessively hard surfaces or bedrock (such as on ridges), over alkali flats and sandy or gravely soils, through ravines or washes, and other surfaces not conducive to trail preservation.
BLUE MOUNTAINS, OR

Class 3
Class 4: Altered Trail  
Symbol: 4

The trail location is verified but elements of its original condition have been permanently altered, primarily by road construction, such as widening, blading, grading, crowning, graveling, or paving. In some cases, the original trail has been permanently altered by underground cables and pipelines. In other cases, trail segments, whose locations are verified, may have been destroyed by natural events or modern developments, leaving no evidence of its original appearance.
ALTERED (GRADED, CROWN AND DITCH)

Photo by Dave Welch

Class 4
Class 5: Approximate Trail

The trail is either so obliterated or unverifiable that its location is known only approximately. In many cases, trail segments have been destroyed entirely by development, such as highways, structures, agriculture, utility corridors or inundated beneath reservoirs. In other cases, natural causes have removed any remains of a trail. In both cases, there is not enough documentary or geomorphic evidence to locate the trail accurately. Thus, only the approximate route is known.
The original trail segment no longer exists in any form but has been replicated by design and construction to appear as it was during emigrant use at its original location.
DESTROYED CLASS 2
CLASS 6 AFTER RECONSTRUCTION

Photo by Dave Welch
TRAIL CLASSIFICATIONS

Class 1:  Unaltered Trail (Swale, ruts or traces)
Class 2:  Used Trail (Modern use, typically a two track
Class 3:  Verified Trail (but non-existent)
Class 4:  Altered Trail (improved road)
Class 5:  Approximate Trail (general location known)
Class 6:  Reconstructed Trail