

# Castor Canadensis

The Journal of the Jedediah Smith Society ❖ University of the Pacific, Stockton, California



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Spring 2023

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\*Our cover photo, taken by JSS member Peter Meyerhof, captures the beauty of the Pacific Coast just north of Crescent City, California, not far from Jed’s trail.

Jed’s journeys into the American West were arduous—and fatal for many of his men—yet he frequently extolled the magnificence of his surroundings. He delighted in the “undulating prairie” of Mandan country, in the “beautiful encrustation found in the Salt Plain,” in the “rich chocolate loam” of the Sacramento River where, he said, “the whole face of the country is a most beautiful green, resembling a flourishing wheat field.” Jed may have epitomized the rugged individualist and aggressive capitalist, but he also exhibited a vivid aesthetic sensibility.

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*A member of the Jedediah Smith Society Board, Bob Zybach holds a PhD in Environmental Sciences from Oregon State University. He is the author of several articles on a wide range of topics, including the use and management of Oregon forests and early Indian trails. Zybach also has extensive knowledge of Jed's travels through Oregon. He has been recognized for his work with at-risk high school students and for his research into the history of blacks in Oregon. He is a distant relative of David Jackson.*

## **The 2023 Jedediah Smith Society Rendezvous: From Smith River, California, to Fort Vancouver in 1828**

**by Bob Zybach**

*I wanted to be the first to view a country on which the eyes of a white man had never gazed and to follow the course of rivers that run through a new land. Jedediah S. Smith, March 1831*



This painting of Fort Vancouver was made in 1845 or 1846 by British military spy Henry Warre while under orders to “obtain a general knowledge of the capabilities of the Oregon Territory in a Military point of view” in “perfect secrecy, so far as possible.” The fort was being constructed during Smith’s winter 1828-29 stay there, and he may well have been among its first occupants.

The April 2-5, 2023, Jedediah Smith Rendezvous followed Jedediah Smith’s 1828 route from Smith River, California, to Smith River, Oregon, and finally to Fort Vancouver. The theme of the Rendezvous was a comparison and contrast of the foods, people, and landscapes Smith and his men encountered with those of our time.

To assist participants in learning about this theme, I assembled four Guidebooks, one for each day of the tour. Each Guidebook includes a detailed and documented map of Smith’s 1828 routes and campsite locations, beginning south of Hoopa Valley in northwest California on May 2 and ending with his return to Fort Vancouver on December 11. (Two representative pages of the Guidebooks, including instructions for their use, follow this essay. Copies of all four Guidebooks will be available on the Jedediah Smith Society website shortly after renovations to the site are complete.)

At each campsite from May 2 (Hogback Ridge) through July 13 (Defeat River), either Smith or his clerk Harrison Rogers made daily journal entries regarding their foods, encounters with natives, travel progress, and campsite locations. These journals constitute the earliest historical documentation of the lands and people of northern California and the southern Oregon Coast. Transcriptions of the journals appear in the Guidebooks in chronological order and are indexed by page numbers to the maps. Daily journal entries after July 13 were written by Alexander Roderick McLeod, Chief Trader for the Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC) based at Fort Vancouver. Our Rendezvous participants could thus read original verbatim eyewitness accounts by three “journalists” of native peoples, customs, and geographical features from the 1820s, and compare or contrast them to their own experiences and environments nearly

200 years later. For anyone who wishes to conduct further studies, the Guidebooks also contain reference lists of the journals themselves and interpretations by scholars.

An excellent hunter and beaver trapper, and a proven survivor and leader, Smith has often been compared to Lewis, Clark, and Fremont as one of the most important explorers and cartographers of the western US. He was also an important ethnologist shortly before the indigenous people he met and described were ravaged by disease and whose cultures were forever changed by guns, trade goods, and social contacts with foreign white (and black) people and their powerful domesticated animals.

Smith and Rogers traveled with 16 or 18 armed men and 300 horses and mules loaded with traps, guns, ammunition, hundreds of beaver skins, camping equipment, and trade items—mostly beads. Travel routes were determined by topography, river crossings, and pasturage. Fresh water, prairies, and grassy meadows were essential for survival; elk and Indian trails along ridgelines and riparian areas were key travel routes; fallen logs, cliffs, and nearly impenetrable thick brush—predominantly rhododendron, salmonberry, salal, hazel, and huckleberry—were frequent impediments.

Several people were helpful in planning and coordinating the Rendezvous, including Wayne Knauf, Milton von Damm, Rich Cimino, Joe Green, and myself. Joe Molter supplied field research and suggestions for the California leg of the trip; Jim Auld provided significant insight into the Umpqua disaster and burial site history; and Jim Anderson made arrangements and contacts for the Oregon City and Fort Vancouver visits.

Our traveling Rendezvous was specifically intended to be a series of one-day events so that we could accommodate local participants and others unable to be present for our entire journey north. The four Guidebooks were developed with this benefit in mind, but also for anyone who wishes to visit these locations later.

All four days of the Rendezvous began with a 9:00 a.m. rendezvous in the parking lots of the local Best Western Motels in Crescent City, Bandon, Reedsport, and Dallas, respectively. From there we formed a caravan to each of the designated stops for that day's travel. Amazingly, no one got lost; there were no vehicle problems, no disputes, and everyone reached each stop or mealtime as scheduled and in good spirits.

Our first day followed Smith's and Rogers' daily journal entries from their June 14, 1828, Cushing Creek campsite, just south of present-day Crescent City, north to their July 2 Coquille River camp near Bandon.

At the Crescent Beach Overlook, as shown in the Guidebooks, we could see the Cushing Creek campsite where Smith, his men, and their many horses and mules sojourned for two days. They had just arrived at low tide from their camp at Endert Beach when Rogers wrote, "Plenty of grass on the mountain for our horses, but very steep for them to climb after it."

As Smith discovered, Cushing Creek was much better:

It being low tide by passing around a point in the water I was enabled to travel along the shore and encamped in a prairie [sic] of about 100 acres of tolerable grass. In the vicinity was a plenty of Elk sign.

So, he decided to stay another day:

I lay by to recruit my horses. Several of us went hunting and Joseph Lapoint in the morning killed one of the largest [animals] Elk I had ever seen. He was not very fat but [in] tolerable [order] good meat. His size induced me to weigh the meat which I found to weigh 695 lbs neat weight exclusive of the tongue and some other small pieces which would have made it above 700 lbs.

Rogers:

A number of Inds. visited our camp again to day, bringing fish, clams, strawberries, and a root that is well known by the traders west of the Rocky mountains by the name of commeser, for trade.

The Indians to which Rogers refers were probably the native Tolowa, and they had an abundance and variety of quality foods for meals and trade. The men in Smith's party typically shared a diet of deer, bear, and elk as they traversed northern California and western Oregon, but their fare also included an occasional horse, their only dog, and flour—with a greater variety when they could trade beads for food. The travelers' first encounters with lamprey eels were mostly negative, but even these creatures were soon eagerly eaten, along with berries, fish, clams, and camas.



From Cushing Creek we followed Smith through Elk Valley. Today it consists mostly of trees, buildings, lawns, and fields, but Smith described it this way in 1828:

One mile along the beach north & then turning to the right I traveled 4 Miles across a prairie leaving a range of hills on the East running North not far distant and thickly covered with Hemlock & Cedar. The prairie was covered with brakes bushes & grass & had many springs.

And Rogers:

The day clear and warm, plenty of muskeatoes, large horse flies, and small knats to bite us and pesterous early of mornings and late in the evenings. The timber along the bottom, cedar, hemlock of the largest size, under brush, hazle, briars, aldar, and sundry other s[h]rubs; the soil very rich and black.

From Elk Valley we moved to Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Park because of its common history with the Jedediah Smith Society and for photo opportunities. It is doubtful that Jed's party entered this area because of insufficient pasturage and obstructions like fallen trees and limbs, although they probably explored some of its western perimeter where there are many trees "of the largest size."

We were surprised to find no interpretive signs, pamphlets, or other information about Jedediah Smith in the Park or in the adjacent Hiouchi Interpretive Center. We learned that even the tiny Jedediah Smith Visitor Center would be closed in fall and winter. We were later informed by Patrick Taylor, Interpretation and Education Program Manager for Redwoods National and State Parks, that a project is in the works to update the Park's informational and interpretive signage, and that the Jedediah Smith Society will be consulted regarding proposed texts and installations.

After a stop at the expedition's campsite on the north side of Smith River, we entered Oregon, crossed the Winchuck and Chetco Rivers and were treated to pizza by Tolowa Dee-Ni' Nation chairperson, Jeri Lynn Thompson, and her daughter, Katrina Thompson-Upton, at her Northwest American Indian Coalition office in Brookings. Another Tolowa mother and daughter were also present, and together with our group and a local journalist, more than a dozen individuals discussed Smith and Northwest Indian history. We carried on a meaningful dialogue focused on Smith's expedition through Northwest Indian communities, recognizing the subsequent negative impact on the indigenous peoples who consider these areas their home "since time immemorial." As we explored the legacy of these encounters, we also contemplated how to improve regional racial and ethnic relationships and our shared histories.

Our first coastal stop in Oregon was Harris Beach State Park where we discussed the broken cliffs and stretches of sandy beaches that extend from northern California to Vancouver Island and still show the dramatic effects—and distinct travel barriers—that remain from the January 26, 1700, Cascadia earthquake and ensuing tsunami. This catastrophic event has been precisely dated using Japanese tsunami documentation and tree-ring analyses of submerged trees. Survivor accounts undoubtedly remained in the generational memory and stories of the native people Smith encountered. Smith's pack trail was the first along the southern Oregon Coast—memorable for its sheer cliffs and deep brush-filled ravines. Much of today's Highway 101 follows this route, but the oral histories are forever lost.



Harris Beach looking south.

The geological effects of the 1700 Cascadia earthquake and subsequent tsunami, still apparent today, formed formidable barriers to Smith's expedition. Note the people and driftwood at the base of the cliff for scale.  
April 2, 2023, photo by Peter Meyerhof.

As Smith reached the Rogue River, he increasingly noticed indications of European trade items on a route established in January of the previous year by HBC Chief Trader McLeod. An excellent trapper in his own right, McLeod was promoted by the HBC to brigade leader. Like Smith and Rogers, he kept a daily journal as he looked for new sources of beaver.

Because Smith and Rogers' 1828 route and campsites retraced McLeod's, the Guidebooks also include McLeod's journal entries for 1826 and 1827.

On July 2, after leaving Sixes River, Rogers noted the topography:

The country, for 3 days past, appears to leave the effects of earth quakes at some period past, as it is quite cut to pieces in places and very broken, although it affords such an abundance of good grass and clover.

When the expedition reached the Brush Creek trail, which skirted the eastern perimeter of Humbug Mountain, Smith's party camped in a grassy prairie of about 1,000 acres. Today this prairie is a manicured State Park with planted trees, mowed fields, and tightly packed campsites. After a drive through this area for context, we met in the Day Use area across the highway, which gives the appearance of an ancient campsite—a place comprised of an old-growth myrtlewood grove, huckleberries, a fish-bearing stream, and shelter against coastal winds and storms.

Other than the obvious towns, highways, roadside weeds, and parklands, the principal differences between the landscapes that Smith, Rogers, and McLeod described in 1828 and the ones we observed in 2023 were (1) far fewer grassy prairies, meadows, and brushy fields (trees, crops, construction); (2) many more trees over a much larger area now (seeding and planting); (3) significantly fewer large, old trees now (logging, windstorms, and wildfire); and (4) more deadwood along the coast and bays now. This latter condition exists mainly because for hundreds of generations greater numbers of people gathered driftwood, limbs, and logs for firewood, construction materials, and tools. Such practices mostly ended 50 to 75 years ago.

The final stop for the day was Bandon where participants were encouraged to visit the 1854 Nasomah Massacre memorial. Here, an interpretive sign fronts a small landscaped park with a short walkway featuring culturally significant native plants and a symbolic art installation. The sign features an evocative poetic recounting of Nasomah history and culture with the telling words, "Right Here." One line reads, "We watched Jedediah Smith destroy our houses and build rafts from the cedar planks. That was in 1828." That happened. Right Here.

On Day 2 our first visit was to Seven Devils Beach, followed by a drive along Seven Devils Road, an example of the rugged terrain Smith encountered inland from the ocean beaches. We made a brief stop on our way to Cape Arago at the South Slough Interpretive Center to observe the nearly impassible brushlands of salal, huckleberry, salmonberry, hazel, and rhododendron the expedition had faced. At the Cape Arago campsite Rogers wrote,

Marishall caught a boy about 10 years old and brought him to camp. I give him some beads and dried meat; he appears well and satisfied, and makes signs that the Inds. have all fled in their canoes and left him.

This was the Kalapuyan slave boy named Marion, who Smith later claimed was the Umpqua Indian killed less than two weeks later during the so-called Umpqua Massacre.

From Cape Arago our Rendezvous followed Smith's route to Sunset Bay. There, the expedition found good pasturage and traded for food with local natives while cutting a path through the brush and marshes separating the coast from South Slough and Coos Bay. At the Hollering Place, in present-day Empire, Rogers penned a July 9 note:

We crossed in Ind. canoes; a great many Inds. live along the river bank; there houses built after the fashion of a shed. A great many Inds. in camp with fish and berris for sale; the men bought them as fast as they brought them.



Sunset Bay.

Smith's party spent two days here, with good forage. However, they had to forge a difficult two-mile path through coastal brush and bogs to reach present-day South Slough and Coos Bay.  
February 2, 2023, photo by Bob Zybach.

From the Hollering Place we traveled to the Coos History Museum where we met local historians Steve Greif, David Gould, and author Lionel Youst, who compared a story from McLeod's written journal to a local native oral history account. Youst also provided the group with an annotated index to the comprehensive research materials he has donated to the Museum for use by students, teachers, and other researchers. Lunch was served at the Seven Devils Brewery in Coos Bay.

The final stop for the day was the site of the infamous Umpqua "Massacre" and subsequent Christian burial of 11 of the men killed during that incident. Weeks before our Rendezvous, the Jedediah Smith Society had secured official Oregon Historic Cemetery recognition for this location, and we discussed an appropriate memorial.

During the Rendezvous we did not speculate about the routes taken by the survivors of the July 14 murders—Smith, Arthur Black, John Turner, and Richard Leland. Black, alone, was the first to reach Fort Vancouver safely, as Chief Factor John McLoughlin reported to HBC headquarters on August 10:

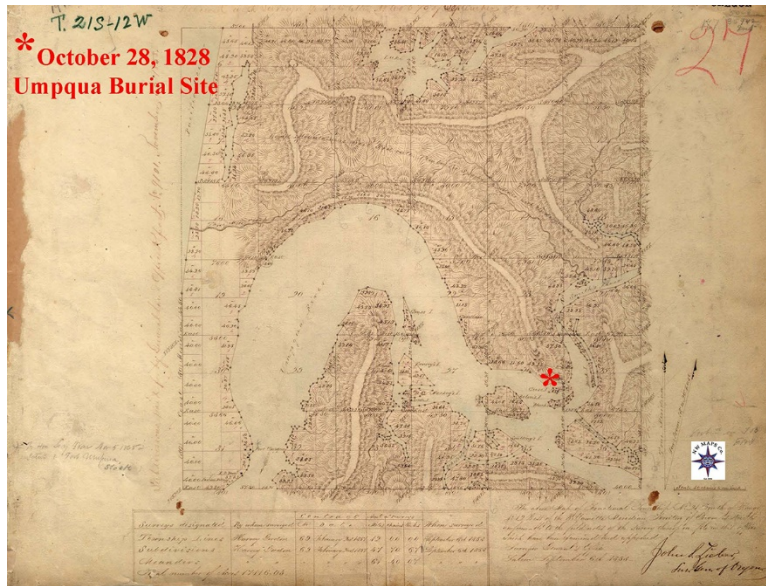
*Honble. Sirs, On the 8th Inst. at 10 P.M. an American of the name of Black reached this place, in his opinion at the time, the only survivor of a Party of Nineteen (19) Americans, the remainder having been massacred by the Natives of the Um[p]qua River . . .*

On the following day Smith, Turner, and Leland arrived—thus, four survivors in all. McLoughlin quickly ordered McLeod to assemble a brigade, return with Smith to the scene of the attack, and retrieve as much of the Americans' livestock, furs, and other possessions as possible. Any physical punishments imposed on the perpetrators were left to McLeod's discretion.

The daily campsite and journal entries transcribed in the third and fourth Guidebooks are McLeod's. Smith, Black, Turner, and Leland accompanied him and the HBC brigade on the recovery trip back to Defeat River—as Smith had named it—and on their subsequent return to Fort Vancouver. Upon reaching the mouth of Smith River on October 28, 1828, McLeod described the stark scene:

*Stoped at the entrance of the North Branch, where Mr. Smiths Party were destroyed, and a Sad Spectacle of Indian barbarity presented itself to our View, the Skeletons of eleven of those Miserabl Sufferers lying bleaching in the Sun, after paying the last Service to their remains we continued forward and made the Coast . . .*





Annotated 1858 US General Land Office (GLO) subdivision map of Tsp. 21 S., Rng. 12 W., Sec. 26 by surveyor Harvey Gordon. While surveying the shoreline near the mouth of Smith River, as marked on the map, he noted: "Place where Indians murdered eleven men in the employ of Smith, Sublette & Co., about thirty years ago." Fourteen or fifteen of Smith's men were killed during the attack, but the latter number may include the Kalapuyan slave boy, Marion, who probably survived. At least eight men, including Rogers, had lived, worked, and traveled together for two years or more: John Gaiter, John Hanna, Abraham Laplante, Emmanuel Lazarus, Martin McCoy, Peter Ranne, and John Robaseu. Of these, Ranne was notable as "the first black man to enter California."

The six other men who were killed had been hired by Smith the previous July and had recently survived a massacre with him earlier in August when ten of their fellows were unexpectedly killed by local natives along the Colorado River. These survivors had then united with the other trappers in California the following month, September, and had been with them ever since: Thomas Daws, Joseph Lapointe, Toussaint Maréchal, Joseph Palmer, Charles Swift, and Thomas Virgin. These six had all started out together on July 13, 1827, and died with the others on July 14, 1828.



This sign at the intersection of Stables Road and Lower Smith River Road marks the approximate location of the "Smith massacre" as noted by surveyor Harvey Gordon in 1858.  
April 3, 2023, photo by Tam Moore.



The third day of the Rendezvous began with a visit to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Elk Viewing Area along the Umpqua River a few miles east of Reedsport. About 120 horses and mules grazed here on a tidal prairie that must have been similar to the pasturage near the 1828 Smith River campsite. From there we toured the Fort Umpqua replication in Elkton, hosted by Deborah Gritton, the Education Program Coordinator for the Elkton Community Education Center. After a lunch at Arlene’s Restaurant, some of our party returned to California.

From Elkton, we closely followed Smith’s and McLeod’s routes and campsites to the Forks of Elk Creek and Pass Creek at present-day Drain, and then the Territorial Road through Anlauf, Lorane, Crow, Veneta, Elmira, Franklin, and Cheshire to Monroe. This route was pioneered by McLeod as the HBC “pack trail” to the Umpqua in 1826 and then developed into the 1829 California Trail for HBC beaver trapping expeditions to the Sacramento Valley. It was eventually converted into the Applegate Trail wagon road in 1846 and became Oregon’s first Territorial Road in 1851.

This path was a segment of the main route from the Willamette Valley through the Elk Mountain [Mountain La Biche] to the Umpqua Valley, and from the Columbia River to San Francisco until an alternate route from Pass Creek began to be favored and later evolved into today’s 99-W and I-5. From Monroe to Adair Village, we took the modern route on 99-W (dating to 1852) before returning to McLeod’s HBC pack trail through Tampico, Airlie, the Little Luckiamute River crossing at Bridgeport, and ending at the Dallas Best Western where we had dinner with Northwest Metis historian Rob Foxcurran, who traveled with us from that point forward.

Our final day began with a brief tour of Champoeg hosted by Park Manager David Figgins. We viewed the Park’s catalogued artifact collection and visited the monument to the 1843 Wolf Meeting and then stopped at the Museum of Oregon Territory in Oregon City with its spectacular views of Willamette Falls and its collection of historical documents and native artifacts. We met Jim Anderson, Virginia Jaquez, and Suzi Schoensee there and caravanned to our final destination—Fort Vancouver.



Fort Vancouver restoration by the National Park Service (NPS) as it appears today—in the same dimensions and appearance as seen by Smith while the fort was being constructed in 1828 and as painted by Warre in 1845-46. April 5, 2023, photo by Peter Meyerhof.

Our tour guide at the fort was Aaron Ochoa, a longtime National Park Service Chief of Interpretations at Fort Vancouver who had recently returned from a tour of duty to Thailand as a National Guardsman. Though this was his first day back on the job, he adeptly guided us through a history of the HBC, Fort Vancouver, and the fur trade, with visits to the fur storage warehouse, Indian trading store, blacksmith shop, and Chief Trader’s kitchen. Another highlight was a presentation by Matt Dalimata, the fort’s jolly and knowledgeable blacksmith.



Aaron Ochoa, Fort Vancouver Chief of Interpretations, informing us about the cannons in front of the Chief Factor's house. April 5, 2023, photo by Bob Zybach

Our final rendezvous was dinner at the nearby Beaches Restaurant along the Columbia River. Goodbyes, thank yous—and we all went our separate ways.



The final stop at the Fort Vancouver Chief Factor's house on the way to a parting regale at The Beaches Restaurant on the Columbia River. (L-R) Rob Foxcurran, Bob Zybach, Jim Anderson, Suzi Schoensee, Aaron Ochoa, Virginia Jaquez, Eric Tschuy, and Peter Meyerhof. April 5, 2023, photo by Matt Dalimata.



# Excerpts from the 2023 Rendezvous Guidebooks

by Bob Zybach

## Jedediah Smith Society April 2-5, 2023 Rendezvous The People, Foods, and Landscapes of 1828



April 2 Guidebook (1): California Redwoods  
May 2 - June 22, 1828

## Travels Through the Lands of Hoopa, Yurok, and Tolowa by Jedediah Smith and Harrison Roger

### Jedediah Smith Society 2023 Rendezvous Guidebook #1 Table of Contents: May 26 - June 22, 1828

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considerable difficulty to the beach of the ocean where I encamped. I drove the horses across a small creek where there was some grass. The horses lost the day before were found and brought up. 3 of my men quite sick.

ROGERS: THURSDAY, JUNE 12TH. All hands up early and ready for a start, directing our course W. about 2 miles and struck a small creek, where there was some grass on the mountain for our horses, and enc. for the day, the traveling very bad. The horses that was left yesterday, was found to-day, and brought to camp. The day clear: some fog in the morning.

#### Ender Beach (June 13, 1828)

SMITH: June 13th North N West along a ridge in places rough with thickets and rocks. At night descending to and encamping on the shore where there was but little grass. In the course of the day 3 Mules gave out and were left one load was lost and one [] horse was disabled by falling down a ledge of rocks.

ROGERS: FRIDAY, JUNE 13TH, 1828. We made an early start again this morning, steering N.W., about 6 m., and struck the ocean and enc. on the beach. Plenty of grass on the mountain for our horses, but very steep for them to climb after it. The traveling very mountainous; some brush as yesterday. 2 mules left today that give out and could not travel; one young horse fell down a point of mou. and killed himself. The day clear and pleasant.

#### Cushing Creek (June 14, 1828)

SMITH: June 14th North 1 Mile. It being low tide by passing around a point in the water I was enabled to travel along the shore and encamped in a prairie of about 100 acres of tolerable grass. In the vicinity was a plenty of Elk sign. The prospect ahead was somewhat flattering and I was in hope that we had passed all the mountains. Some men sent back for the purpose found the lost load and brought up the fatigued mules.

ROGERS: SATURDAY, JUNE 14TH, 1828. We made an early start again this morning, directing our course along the sea shore N., about 1 mile, and struck a low neck of land running into the sea, where there was plenty of clover and grass for our horse, and enc. for the day. We travelled in the water of the ocean 3 or 4 hundred yards, when the swells some times would be as high as the horses backs. 2 men sent back after a load of fur that was lost yesterday, and to look after horses. 2 hunters dispatched after elk as soon as we enc. One fat deer killed yesterday by J. Hanna. Seven or 8 Inds. came to camp; Capt. Smith give them some beads. The hunters returned without killing any game; saw plenty of elk sign. The day clear and windy.

SMITH: June 15th I lay by to recruit my horses. Several of us went hunting and Joseph Lapoint in the morning killed one of the largest [] Elk I had ever seen. He was not very fat but [] tolerable [] good meat. His size induced me to weigh the meat which I found to weigh 695 lbs neat weight exclusive of the tongue and some other small pieces which would have made it above 700 lbs.

## Guidebook Instructions

The four 2023 Rendezvous Guidebooks were designed for JSS members, students, researchers, and others with an interest in local history and places. These two pages illustrate how the guidebooks were used during the Rendezvous at the first stop: the Crescent Beach Overlook viewing the modern location and landscape of Smith's April 14, 1828, campsite near the mouth of Cushing Creek.

**Facing Page:** (upper left) This is the cover of Guidebook #1, featuring a reproduction of Paul Calles 1987 painting, *In the Land of Giants*. Smith and others probably viewed the redwoods, but it is unlikely they brought pack teams or horses into them because of surface obstructions and lack of browse. (upper right) A GIS map created by Vyla Grindberg, based on research by Joe Molter and Bob Zybach, showing Cushing Creek campsite in relation to Smith's travel route. (lower left) The Table of Contents showing 1828 dates of named and mapped campsites and the page in the guidebook in which Smith's and Rogers' transcribed journal entries for that day can be found. (lower right) Cushing Creek campsite transcribed journal entries.

**This Page:** (top) Crescent Beach Overlook with (L-R) Milton von Damm, Arthur Hurley, Peter Meyerhof, Suzi Schoensee, Virginia Jaquez, and Richard Cimino. Photo April 2, 2023, by Tam Moore. (center) View of Cushing Creek campsite from Crescent Beach Overlook. April 2, 2023, photo by Peter Meyerhof. (bottom) Map of Smith route to and from the Cushing Creek campsite by Joe Molter.



\*Guidebook copies will be available on the JSS website as soon as renovations to the site are complete.

*James Ahrens was president of the Montana Hospital Association and also chair of the National Veterans Rural Health Advisory Committee. After retirement from the MHA, he started a consulting company that served several health-care organizations. In 2017 he and his wife Kathleen moved to Bakersfield, California, where Ahrens remains active in community and Kern County activities, including the Kern River Fly Fishers. He is a member the Jedediah Smith Society Board.*