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# SHARPSHOOTER

OREGON SOCIETY OF SOIL SCIENTISTS

VOL. XVI NO. 2

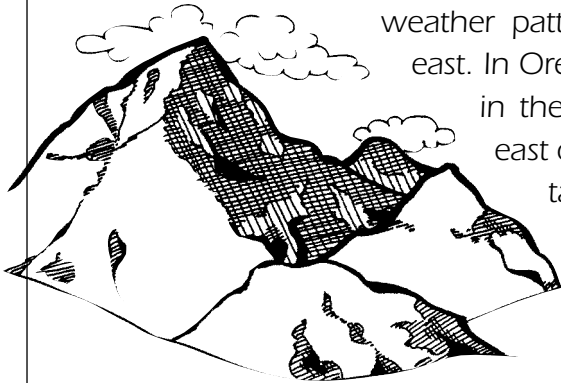


## The Great Outback Adventure

**OSSS Summer Tour**  
**August 22, 2003**

*By Tom Clark*

In Australia the "Outback" is in the rain shadow to the west of the Great Divide Mountains as the prevailing weather patterns come from the east. In Oregon the "Outback" is in the rain shadow to the east of the Cascade Mountains as the prevailing weather patterns come from the west.



Why is this so? I'm glad you asked. Because Oregon is in the Northern Hemisphere and Australia is in the Southern Hemisphere where the prevailing winds are just the opposite.

But the biggest difference is that the OSSS is having their 2003 Summer Tour on Friday, August 22nd, in the Oregon "Outback"! The Australian "Outback" will be reserved for a future Winter Tour. Get it?

We will see the geologic wonders Hole in the Ground, Fort Rock, and Crack in the Ground. We will see the grave of Reub Long, famous southeastern Oregon rancher and author of the "Oregon

*(Continued on page 6.)*



**Fort Rock basaltic tuff ring.**

Late Pleistocene basaltic magma rising to the Earth's surface under a Pleistocene lake erupted explosively by interaction with the water. Waxing and waning of the rate of eruption produced alternating outward and inward growing tuff facies. Subsequent erosion by the lake has exposed the internal structure of the tuff ring. Photo & caption text from: [www.uoregon.edu/~dogsci/student/fieldcamp/fieldcamp3.html](http://www.uoregon.edu/~dogsci/student/fieldcamp/fieldcamp3.html)

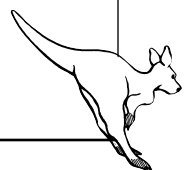
**Whose fault is Crack in the Ground?**

*By Jim Witty*

Whose fault is it?

Crack in the Ground belongs to all of us. Located on a tract administered by the Bureau of Land Management north of Christmas Valley, Crack in the Ground is a little-known public treasure, a clear-cut example of what these common geologic features look like.

*(Continued on page 7.)*



# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



**Tom Clark**  
**OSSS President**

*By Tom Clark*

As a Soil Scientist working on many soil survey projects during my career, I have been involved in inventory of the soil resource or soil survey. The last 10 to 15 years have seen an explosion of computer technology that has altered the landscape of soil survey. It started with Word Processing and primitive databases and has progressed to ArcView, ArcInfo, and a number of GIS applications that have allowed us to present our product to the users of soil information in a number of ways. We can present our product visually like never before. I, like many others, am very impressed by these

visual presentations. Who doesn't use Power Point?

This leads me to some major concerns of mine. Are we neglecting base data collection to concentrate on the end product? Are we implying more detail of information than there actually is? Are we losing expertise and experience through retirement and attrition in basic soil data collection and soil survey that is not adequately being replaced?

Here are a few observations from my limited perspective. First, basic soil survey is very labor and cost intensive and takes time (although some of the computer applications have shortened the field time needed). We don't have the financial resources to put people in the field in these economic times. We are fighting other resource concerns for people and money. Second, many of the entries in the NRCS soil

survey program have stayed in field mapping for only a short while and then have gone into the computer or GIS side of Soil Survey. Other soil scientists have gone on to related fields in environmental soil science, consulting, etc. This is understandable in a society that rewards progress in these areas. Third, we are in a society that no longer places a premium on physical outdoor work. Who wants to be digging holes at the age of 50 or 60 or even 40?

In conclusion, I would like to see the incredible visual representations of soil data that are available to us have a good solid basis in the real world. If not, I fear that we will be "found out" and we'll lose our credibility with the public we are working for.

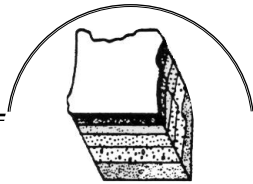


# EDITOR'S NOTES

*By Steve Campbell*

Allen Gerig, NRCS resource soil scientist in Baker City retired at the end of June. A retirement party for Allen was held on June 28th at the Haines Steak House just outside of Baker City. For details contact Patty Shumway at the Baker City NRCS office at (541) 523-7121 ext. 101.

Thanks to everyone that has contributed information and articles to the Sharpshooter. We welcome any information you care to submit related to soil science activities in Oregon.



# EASTSIDE NOTES

by Ed Horn

The days are getting longer, hotter and with an above average hit of spring moisture the fine fuel grass levels are high. The prediction now is for an above average fire season here on the east side. Time will tell.

The Crook County soil survey crew in Redmond is concentrating their soil mapping efforts in the Camp Creek watershed drainage. The Crook County Soil and Water Conservation District has secured funding, and is starting to put together a watershed assessment for the Camp Creek Drainage in central Crook County. This assessment will be conducted on private and federal lands and was spurred by soil erosion problems along Camp Creek, according to Tom Clark, Soil Scientist for the Crook County soil survey.

In talking with Mark Keller, in Burns, the Burns crew is busy putting the finishing touches on the North Lake County soil survey. Field mapping has been completed. A review of the soil mapping unit joins into the surrounding soil surveys will be conducted this August.

The Bureau of Land Management soils and range people are busy working on a soil/range health assessment in the Hampton area of Upper Deschutes and Crook Counties. This update is to help further define sage grouse habitat, which have been declining in numbers.

A rare 3 day BLM Soil Scientist get together will be held in Eugene the end of June to compare notes on east and west side soil issues. I hope to have more on that next time. That's all from the sunny side.

# DUES REMINDER

This is now the start of the new membership year. so please send your dues to the OSSS treasurer:

OSSS  
c/o Frank Wildensee  
8027 S.E. Yamhill St. Ste. A  
Portland, OR 97215

## Membership rates

\$25.00	Voting member
13.00	Associate member
30.00	Sustaining member
5.00	Student member
250.00	Lifetime member

In addition to your dues, please consider an additional amount for:

- the "Soil Judging Team"
 

___ \$10	___ \$25	___ \$___
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- the "OSSS Student Scholarship Fund"
 

___ \$10	___ \$25	___ \$___
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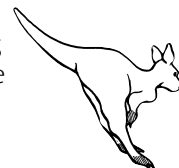


# DATES TO REMEMBER

## July 26-30, 2003

Soil and Water Conservation Society Annual Meeting; Spokane, Washington.  
Information available at:  
<http://www.swcs.org/>

**August 22, 2003** OSSS Summer Tour - Bend (see information in this Sharpshooter)



## November 2-6, 2003

Soil Science Society of America Annual Meeting; Denver, Colorado.  
Information available at:  
<http://www.asa-cssa-sssa.org/anmeet/>

## CONSULTANT'S CORNER

### 2003-Soil Consultants

Cascade Earth Sciences, Ltd.  
Brian Rabe, CPSS  
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Albany, OR 97321  
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Fax: (541) 926-7758

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John Parcell CPSS/SC  
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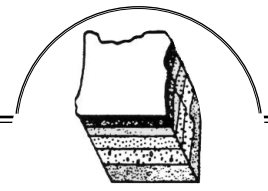
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## Redesigned Web Site for NRCS Oregon Soil Survey Information

By Steve Campbell

The Pacific Northwest Soil Survey Region (MO-1) web site was recently completely redesigned. The direct link to the site is at <http://www.or.nrcs.usda.gov/soils.html>. For information about a specific Oregon soil survey area, click on the "Pacific Northwest Soil Survey Region" link then choose "Soil Survey Reports" and "Oregon". You'll be taken to a list of Oregon soil survey areas. Choose the soil survey area you're interested in then you'll have a number of options for viewing or downloading soils information.

These include:

- The text of the published soil survey report in PDF format
- Legend of soil map symbols and map unit names
- Interactive soil maps with aerial photo background, streams, and section lines
- Standard soil survey tables in PDF format
- ArcView shapefiles in UTM and Oregon Lambert projections, NAD 83
- MS Access database with soil properties and interpretations.

Hydric soil lists for all Oregon soil surveys are also available at <http://www.or.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/soil/hydric.html>.

Please contact Steve Campbell at (503) 414-3009 or e-mail at [steve.campbell@or.usda.gov](mailto:steve.campbell@or.usda.gov) if you have any questions.



### Special Interest Story Reuben A. Long

Reuben A. Long, a native Oregonian and a 70-year resident of Fort Rock, south-east of Bend, was a living legend in the state's agricultural community. Prior to his death in 1974, Long had been a horse rancher and conservationist, as well as past chairman and longtime member of the State Board of Agriculture. He was also renowned as a writer and storyteller, most famously as co-author, with the late E. R. Jackman, of *The Oregon Desert*, a regional best-seller.

As a board member for the OSU Foundation, Long was instrumental in securing the Harris Ranch gift, a property which the University now operates for rangeland research purposes. Long also made a significant contribution of his own to the State of Oregon, donating property that the state designated as Ft. Rock State Park.

Before his death, Reub Long established a trust which, upon the passing of its final beneficiary, provided funds for the Reub A. Long Professorship. The professorship is awarded by position to the Dean of the College of Agricultural Sciences and supports development activities and fund-raising programs for the college

and the E.R. Jackman Foundation.

(Photo and story are reprinted here with permission of the O.S.U. Foundation. This information is from: [http://osufoundation.org/endowed\\_positions/long.html](http://osufoundation.org/endowed_positions/long.html))

***"Stories have to be told or they die, and when they die, we can't remember who we are or why we're here."***

*(from a novel: The Secret Life of Bees by Sue Monk Kidd)*



**Outback Adventure** *from page 1.)*

Desert". We will see the Fort Rock Valley and Christmas Valley that formed in a Pleistocene lakebed. We will identify some of the soils in the area and may even look at a couple of soil pits. For those who want to stay around there are Derrick's Cave (highly recommended), the Lost Forest and Sand Dunes near Christmas Lake. And of course, there are many miles of the "Outback" to explore from Bend to Lakeview.

Thursday night, August 21, will be a casual no host get together (the whole tour will be casual) of telling stories, and getting reacquainted. The get together will be at a campsite set up at the Horse Ranch RV/Campground about 24 miles southeast of LaPine on Highway 31. Water, restrooms, showers, and hookups will be available at \$10 for RVs and \$7 for campsites. Just ask which part of the park the OSSS has reserved. There is a small store for incidentals including beverages.

For those who don't want to rough it there is a recommended motel in Christmas Valley and some motels in LaPine.

Christmas Valley:	Lakeside Terrace	1-541-576-2278
LaPine:	Highlander Motel	1-541-536-2131
	Timbercrest Inn	1-541-536-1737
	West View Motel	1-541-536-2115

The Tour will be leaving from the Horse Ranch camp promptly at 9 o'clock and will go to about 5 o'clock. We will try to double up on vehicles to reduce the number, but it won't be near the problem that Crater Lake was two years ago. It's possible that we will have a van or two available. A lunch will be provided out of the back of the Clark van ("Lucy").

There will be restrooms at a couple of places along the route. Please bring water, long sleeve shirts, good boots, and hats that cover the head well. We probably won't see rattlesnakes, but caution is always needed.

**Registration Form**

**The Great  
Outback Adventure  
OSSS 2003 Summer Tour  
Twenty four miles SE of LaPine, Oregon  
August 22, 2003**



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

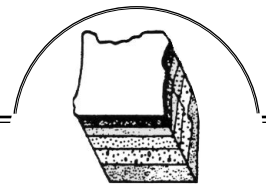
City / State / Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone / email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Cost:**           \$20 per person  
                   \$10 students  
                   \$10 retired members  
                   \$ 5 late fee after August 7th

Lunch will be provided.  
Please make checks out to OSSS, and

**Mail this form to:**  
 Kathy Clark, OSSS Secretary  
 1670 S.W. 26th St.  
 Redmond, Oregon 97756



**Whose Fault?** *from page 1.)*

This particular fissure is 70 feet deep in places and spiders about two miles before continuing northeast and southwest in much less dramatic fashion.

It's unusual in that it's clearly visible from the surface; you can walk right down into it and experience this fault up close. Most faults such as this are filled with dirt and rock, but because Crack in the Ground is in such a dry

area, it hasn't filled in.

Crack in the Ground is believed to have formed over time during numerous earthquakes when the rock was displaced a little each time. From the parking area, walk up the path across the road and you'll see the crack to the left and right. I climbed down in to the right and picked my way south a ways, mindful that the ice along the bottom, which sometimes persists into the summer, is slick and a bit treacherous. Early day homesteaders are said to have stored food inside Crack in the Ground.

You can either go as far as you can and climb out there or return the way you came.

A good pair of hiking boots are recommended; the lava is sharp.

On the road again, Green Mountain is just a few miles farther north. There's a fire lookout there (unmanned in the winter months) and a magnificent view in all directions. Green Mountain is actually a small shield volcano that erupted shortly after Crack in the Ground began forming.

From the lookout, which sits at 5,190 feet above sea level, you can see the Christmas and Fort Rock valleys as well as Diamond Peak 70 miles to the west and Wagontire Mountain 50 miles east.

While you're in the vicinity, why not visit another geologic oddity, Hole in the Ground? It involves a detour off the highway on the way home, but it's not far (see map).



**Hole in the Ground**

Photo from:  
[http://www.ultraflight.com/issues/june2002/oregon\\_outback\\_2001.htm](http://www.ultraflight.com/issues/june2002/oregon_outback_2001.htm)

Hole in the Ground is a 300-foot indentation that formed when molten lava hit water, initiating a huge explosion that created a massive crater. Astronauts trained here in 1966 to simulate a moonscape.

There's food and gas in Christmas Valley, but be prepared to pay top dollar for the petrol (I forked over \$2.08 a gallon for regular on Friday).

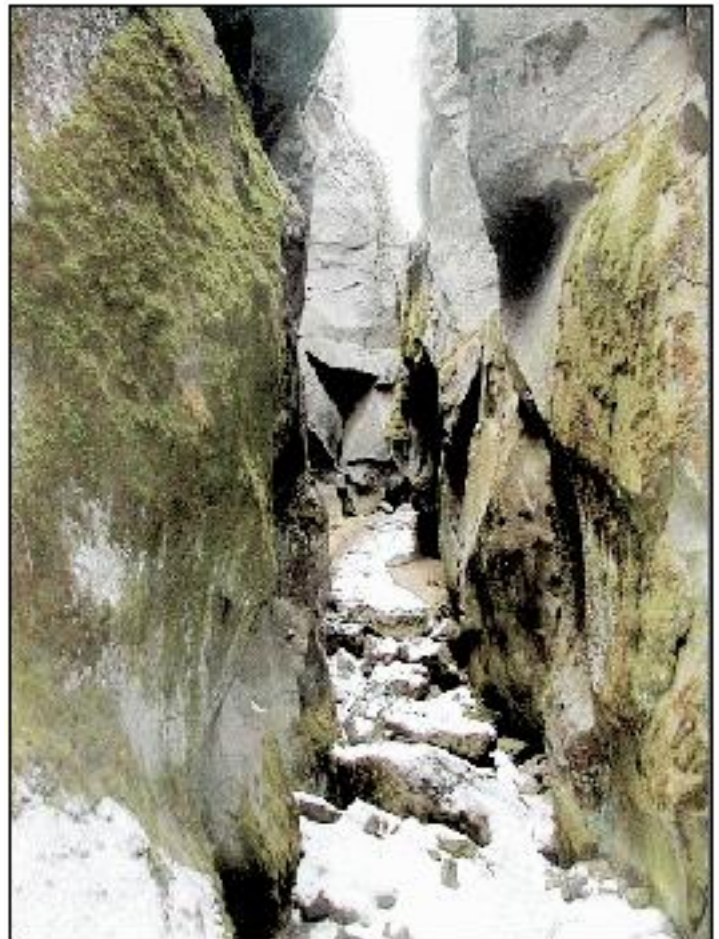
Christmas Valley is rural Lake County's fastest

growing community. It's also the newest, founded in 1961.

Other points of interest hereabout include Derrick Cave, a spacious lava tube 22 miles north of Fort Rock; Fossil Lake, site of an ancient deep-water basin two miles east of Christmas Valley; and Lost Forest, a 9,000-acre stand of ponderosa pines and old growth junipers in an area that gets far less rainfall than it normally takes to sustain tree growth. Lost Forest is 10 miles northeast of Christmas Valley on a passable but sketchy road.

*(This article is reprinted with permission of John Costa, editor of The Bulletin. It was originally published March 12, 2003)*

**Crack in the Ground is about two miles long and is 70 feet deep in places. The fault stays cool throughout the summer months**



## Sharpshooter

The *Sharpshooter* is the official newsletter distributed to the members of the Oregon Society of Soil Scientists. Published quarterly by J.B. Good, Inc. and the Oregon Society of Soil Scientists. Address changes or inquiries about membership to:

OSSS  
Box 2382  
Corvallis, OR 97339

### Web site and email address:

<http://osss.peak.org>  
email: [osss@peak.org](mailto:osss@peak.org)

## Advertisements

Reach more than a hundred soil science professionals with an advertisement in the *Sharpshooter*. And the price is right — whole page \$45, 1/2 page \$25, 1/4 page \$15, or 1/6 page \$10. All you need to do is provide a disk and hard copy to the *Sharpshooter* editor by the deadline (first of the month — January, March, June and November).

All articles and advertisements submitted are subject to room available basis.

## News items

Remember all articles submitted to the *Sharpshooter* can be sent on 3-1/2" disk in most any DOS, MAC or ASCII format, along with a hard copy. In doing so, the *Sharpshooter* can get to you faster.

## Membership rates

\$25.00	Voting member
13.00	Associate member
30.00	Sustaining member
5.00	Student member
250.00	Lifetime member

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OREGON SOCIETY OF SOIL SCIENTISTS  
P.O. Box 2382 • Corvallis, OR 97339

## Join Us for the Great Outback Adventure !

### OSSS Summer Tour

near LaPine, Oregon

August 22, 2003

(details inside)

