

Cottonwood Crossing Chapter SFTA  
Report for National Board Meeting.  
August 2009  
Submitted by Steve Schmidt, Pres.

1. Chapter Officers for 2009:

Steve Schmidt, Pres.  
Sharron Schutte, Vice-Pres  
Kent Becker, Treasurer  
Doug and Pauline Sharp, Secretaries  
~~Gil Michel, Historian~~ (Resigned April 2, 2009 for personal reasons)  
Vernon Lohrentz, Director  
Bill Silverstrand, Director  
Jim and Debi Owens, Directors

2. Installation of "Santa Fe Trail Crosses Here" signs has been completed at every location the SFT crosses a county road. We started in late July and finished in mid-August. We were very fortunate that the county drilled 45 of the post holes for us; one was dug with a member's tractor mounted post hole auger, and 2 had to be dug by hand (which made us really appreciate the other 46 installations!). Getting utility locates and clearances took a lot of time and coordination. However, once we were ready to go, we could complete 4 installations per hour including travel between locations. Chapter Members helping install signs were George Schutte, Bill Silverstrand, Bob Gibson, Marlin Christensen, Jim and Debi Owens, and Steve Schmidt along with County Sign Supervisor Dennis Maggard.

We got nice articles in two local papers about completing the project. The signs look great, and we believe the size of the signs and lettering is appropriate for the situation.

The 1857 public land survey notes were used extensively in deciding where to put the signs. This process lead us to discovery of SFT swales and remains of old limestone markers that we had not noticed before. The notes were supplemented by on-the-ground observations and aerial photos. Steve Schmidt is preparing a detailed report documenting the project and why the signs are placed where they are. We thank the NPS and SFTA for supporting this project.

3. We have completed the first phase of the development of the Lost Spring wayside exhibit, with relocation of the existing monument to its new location on a new concrete base on July 3. The easement for the wayside exhibit was donated to the county by the Shields family whose ancestor was instrumental in initially erecting the monument in 1908. Marion County installed two new culverts for access to the site. We hired a monument company to do the actual relocation, set, and level the monument. The marker fund grant money from SFTA covered this and other expenses associated with the relocation and relocation celebration.

The Shields family and the CCC worked cooperatively in planning and hosting the relocation ceremony which was attended by well over 200 people. The time capsule under the old monument consisted of quart glass jars that had apparently broken some years ago. Everything except stone and metal objects was deteriorated beyond recognition. Steve Schmidt gave a speech outlining the history of the wayside exhibit project and the history of Lost Spring. Other speakers told of their experiences related to the Lost Spring. The event received extensive coverage in local newspapers, including a full page in one paper devoted exclusively to the event.

The new base has provision for installation of a new time capsule, and we are planning to do this on July 4, 2010. We are also moving ahead with design and installation of 3 to 4 historic plaques for the site explaining the history of the Santa Fe Trail, Lost Spring, and Lost Spring Station.

4. Our membership numbers are holding steady --- some fall away and new folks are added. Our mailing list includes 39 paid memberships representing approximately 65 people. Attendance at chapter meetings continues to run around 30 to 35. We raised our dues to \$15 per year per family this year.

5. A good number of our Auto Tour Brochures are being taken from our three literature boxes located along the Marion County Auto Tour Route. We have gotten a number of compliments on our Auto Tour Brochure and our web pages on the SFTA web site. We are working on building a relationship with the Country Haven Inn (a motel) in Hillsboro to be our "Marion County Headquarters" for SFT related literature. They are open 24/7 and located on Hwy 56 in Hillsboro. We have placed a literature rack at the reception desk with SFTA brochures, NPS SFT maps, and Marion County Auto Tour Brochures. The Marion Record newspaper has agreed to run a series of articles, with each article high-lighting one of our points of interest on the auto tour route.

6. Since mid-2006, Steve Schmidt has been following the progress of the TransCanada – Keystone pipeline project which will cross the SFT at two locations in Marion County. Steve furnished information to the cultural resources consultants who surveyed the pipeline route, and this resulted in moving the pipeline to avoid visible SFT swales. However, the consultants did not recommend detailed investigation of the crossings for artifacts or altered sub-surface soil profiles because no visible swales would be crossed.

Steve contacted the Kansas SHPO (State Historic Preservation Office), NPS archaeologists, and private archaeologists, as well as SFTA Board members for support. The Kansas SHPO really went to bat for the SFTA, and requested that the US State Dept (who issues permits for the project because it is an international project) require an archaeological trench excavation prior to construction. The pipeline company agreed, and this fall the proposed crossings will be studied in detail to a depth of a several feet. This should provide valuable information on the exact location of the SFT and its effects on the sub-soil. Results of this investigation will be useful in other similar situations. Thanks to all SFTA members who responded to Steve's request and sent letters of support to the State Dept. Apparently it worked.

7. Vandalism of Marion County road signs is still rampant. We hope this does not expand include our SFT signs and exhibits

8. We continue to appreciate the efforts and hard work of Harry Myers and Joanne Van Coevern. Their assistance and leadership are quite welcome and much appreciated.

9. Our Chapter calendar for 2009 is on the SFTA web site.

10. Our Chapter Board of Directors is very enthusiastic and active. The membership is very supportive of the Board. I believe we have a good Chapter to preserve and promote the SFT in Marion County.