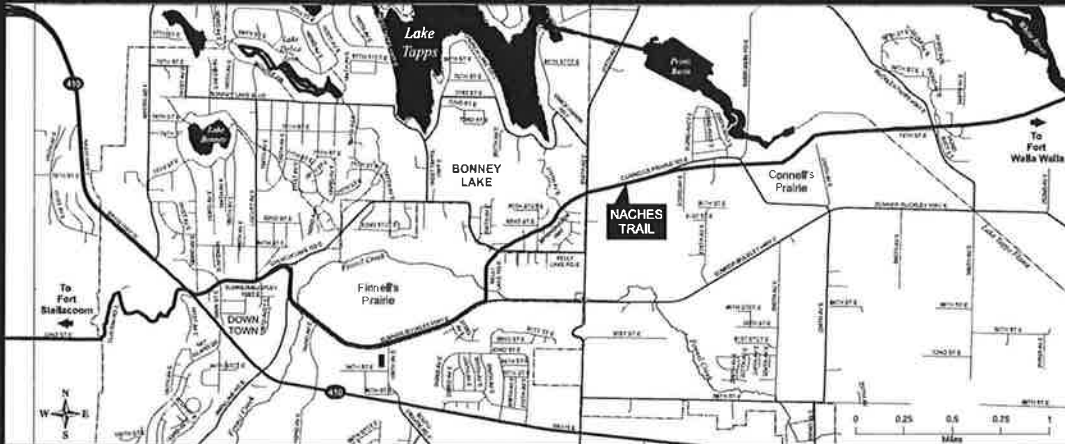


Naches Trail



Map created by Al Catanzaro, City of Bonney Lake GIS Analyst, 2009

For centuries before the arrival of the Hudson's Bay Company fur traders or the migrating settlers, the Native American Indians of the Puget Sound and the eastern reaches of the Columbia Plateau used the Naches Trail. It provided access for trading, hunting, fishing and gathering of roots, nuts and berries.

In 1853, the residents and businessmen of Olympia were tired of waiting for the government to build a road, and they began improving and expanding on the old Indian path of the Naches Trail. This was to become the first wagon road to cross the Cascade Mountains in Washington Territory. It branched off the Oregon Trail and extended from Fort Walla Walla to its terminus at Fort Steilacoom. Even before its completion, the first wagon train to make the historic crossing in September 1853 carried some of the founding families of various Puget Sound communities. The names of Longmire, Biles, Kincaid, and Van Ogle are well known in early territorial settlement.

By late 1855, the Naches Wagon road was the scene of increased military activity during the Indian Wars of 1855-56. With the skirmishes and battles fought by the U.S. Army, the Territorial Volunteer Militia, and the Native Indian Tribes, the trail evolved once again into a military road. During the 1880's it became a regular cattle drive route from the Yakima region to the more populated markets of Puget Sound.

By the mid twentieth century, the original track of the Naches Trail had deteriorated from extensive off road vehicle use and logging of adjacent lands. The 1970's saw the beginning of efforts by various groups to rehabilitate sections of this historic Naches Trail.

This Historic Marker was funded by a grant from Pierce County, with matching funds provided by the City of Bonney Lake.

