

Current

Ada County Parks & Waterways



Fall 2014

Current

Current *adjective* \kúrrənt\
: happening or existing now; most recent; of the immediate present; in progress

Current *noun*

: the swiftest part of a stream; a steady, smooth onward movement

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DIRECTOR'S CUT

Our readers often comment about the colorful photos in our newsletters and we really appreciate the positive feedback. It's taught us that featuring as many **interesting photos** as space allows helps us more effectively share our Department's news and activities. A picture pops off the page much more than a thousand words.

That said, now it's your turn.

To encourage our readers to get outside and visit the awesome Ada County places we're always describing in our newsletter we're announcing our **2014 PHOTO CONTEST**. We want to see **YOUR photos** from **YOUR adventures** here in Ada County. If the cooler weather and vibrant fall colors aren't enough to get you outdoors to explore and unleash your inner photographer we don't know what will. But we're hoping a little recognition and the chance to be a "published" photographer might do the trick. Winning photos will be featured in our next issue of Current scheduled for distribution this winter. Your photo might even make the cover! **Check out page 15 for all the details.**

As far as this issue is concerned, our focus now shifts from our water resources back to our parks, trails, greenbelt, and the always busy Barber Park Education and Event Center (cover photo). Fall is a very popular time to rent the scenic center in the heart of our park for business meetings, fundraisers, luncheons, weddings, receptions, and parties. The covered patio is perfect for all occasions and we can book up to a year in advance so if you have an event in mind don't hesitate to give Candy a call to set your date.

In terms of parks and trail news, this issue brings an update from the Ada County Bike Park & Public Recreation Area (aka the Bike Park) including our recent installation of new trail markers and signage intended to create a more safe and enjoyable user experience. Although we still have other priority items in the works out there, thanks to the commitment and responsiveness of the Ada County Commissioners we've already received a lot of positive feedback regarding the improvements from Bike Park users. Be sure to also check out the trails map centerfold and then get caught up with some great projects initiated at the Bike Park by the Healthy Hills Initiative.

We're also excited to share another impressive report from our Ridge to Rivers partnership in an article that highlights the expansion of the existing trail system into a couple huge areas that are sure to become favorites of local foothills fanatics. With this expansion of publicly managed trails it's great that there's the new TrailSmart© program to help educate folks on responsible and respectful trail use.

We can't share all this great news about our parks and trails without first introducing you to our Parks, Open Space and Trails Advisory Board. Turn the page to learn more about the citizens that volunteer their time to represent the recreational residents of Ada County.

Our final article in this edition is a short piece that highlights the important link between "Parks and Education" for young learners in our community.

Enjoy Fall in Ada County and thanks for keeping Current!

-Scott Koberg, Director



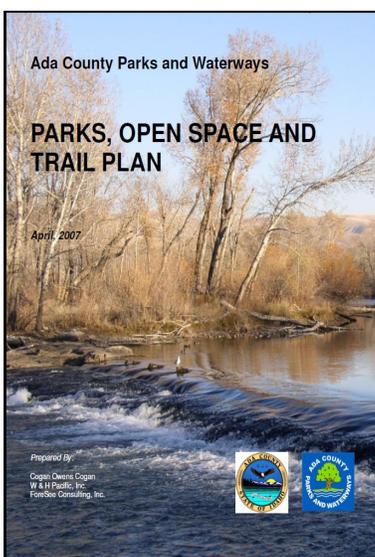
ADA COUNTY PARKS, OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS ADVISORY BOARD



Back row (l-r): Kyle Hemly, Mark Suderman, Chris Cook (Chairman)

Front row (l-r): Jim Keller, Brandy Wilson (Vice Chairperson), David McKinnon (*Not pictured: Kari Kostka)

Appointed by the Board of County Commissioners pursuant to Idaho Code section 31-806 (ACQUISITION OF PROPERTY FOR PARK OR RECREATIONAL PURPOSES), the seven member Ada County Parks, Open Space and Trails Advisory Board consists of county residents who provide advice and make recommendations to the Board of Commissioners concerning potential open space and trails for preservation, conservation, or acquisition by Ada County or for which Ada County might facilitate preservation, conservation or acquisition by others.



This group consists of active and involved community leaders with a passion for the outdoors who serve voluntarily as a liaison between Ada County and 1) the residents of Ada County, 2) users and patrons of Ada County recreation and event services areas, and 3) users of open space and trails in unincorporated Ada County.

The Board is an invaluable resource for our Department and helps us pursue the goals, priorities and implementation actions identified in the Ada County Comprehensive Plan and our Parks, Open Space and Trails Plan. They hold monthly meetings at our Parks & Waterways Department office. For more information visit: <https://adacounty.id.gov/Parks-Waterways/Advisory-Board-and-Committee/Parks>.

Parks, Open Space and Trails Advisory Board

Q & A

Tell us something you feel the public should know about the Parks, Open Space and Trails Advisory Board.

"The board is just a small part of a large group of great people who are working every day to improve access and use of the amazing recreational resources in Ada County." - David McKinnon

"We all recognize the fabulous resources available and are passionate about assisting Ada County with the management of these resources." - Mark Suderman

"The board was formed to advise the commissioners on Parks, Open Space and Trails, but we are by no means an authority. So please stop by one of our monthly meetings as a guest to learn and also teach us something about your part of the county!" - Chris Cook

What do you hope to accomplish during your service?

"My biggest area of focus is the Oregon Trail. I'd love to continue collaboration to protect this national historic resource and implement a plan that balances preservation with access, recreation, and education." - Brandy Wilson

"I'm excited to be involved in discussions regarding expanded use of the Ada County Bike Park." - Kari Kostka

What inspired you to volunteer for a position on the Parks, Open Space and Trails Advisory Board?

"I had worked with the county as a consultant on several exciting projects and wanted to give back to the community through this volunteer opportunity." - Kyle Hemly

"As a past recreation manager, I recognize how many resources and how much effort it takes to provide the level and quality of recreation opportunities that we have in Ada County. As a frequent trail user and river floater, I feel that it is important to contribute to that effort." - Jim Keller

"I am an avid mountain biker and a huge proponent in parks and open space management. This board is a perfect opportunity to assist in areas I enjoy." - Mark Suderman

Do you have a favorite outdoor recreation activity?

"I'm a hiker! My dog appreciates this." - Brandy Wilson

"Trail running." - David McKinnon

"Mountain biking and trail running." - Kyle Hemly

"Mountain biking." - Chris Cook

What Ada County park, open space, trail area, or recreational amenity do you most often visit and use?

"I most often bike and hike along the Ridge to Rivers system of trails but also commute via the Greenbelt and enjoy fishing near Barber Park." - Kari Kostka

"I enjoy riding on trails in the Ada County Bike Park and the Oregon Trail areas most frequently." - Jim Keller

We just keep rolling along at the

Ada County Bike Park



In April when the Ada County Commissioners accepted an offer by the City of Eagle to purchase about 49 acres of property in northwest Ada county near the corner of Old Horseshoe Bend and Floating Feather, an existing lease agreement was cancelled for the adjacent county property. Already a part of the county's **Hidden Hollow Landfill buffer area** and laced with recreational trails developed in part by the now defunct Idaho Velodrome Cycling Park Association, the property has been a **regional trails hotspot** for several years. Now with the support of the Commissioners and in cooperation with Ada County Operations/Landfill, our department has assumed management responsibilities for the existing trail system on county property.

Although the area is enjoyed by a variety of trail users, the predominance of mountain biking and the initial creation of some bike-specific trails at the site has led most users to refer to it simply as

"The Bike Park". Whatever you choose to call it, it's well worth a visit. With 13 named trails totaling approximately 10 miles (6+ miles of multi-use cross country trails, 2 miles of downhill only mountain bike trails, and 1+ miles managed by Ridge to Rivers) packed into about 310 acres of county property with stellar views, there's something for everyone.

If you're a first timer it won't take long to realize how distinct some of the trail features are when compared to any other trail region in the foothills. And if you're already a regular visitor you've likely noticed the



improvements we’ve made since April to enhance user experience, create clarity, and promote safety. We’ll continue to work with existing user groups in the short term to complete a few more high priority items (including the unfinished “Flow Trail”) and then we’ll be reaching out to adjacent landowners, neighbors, and other trail users to encourage broader community input, involvement, and volunteer participation. We intend to initiate outreach later this year.

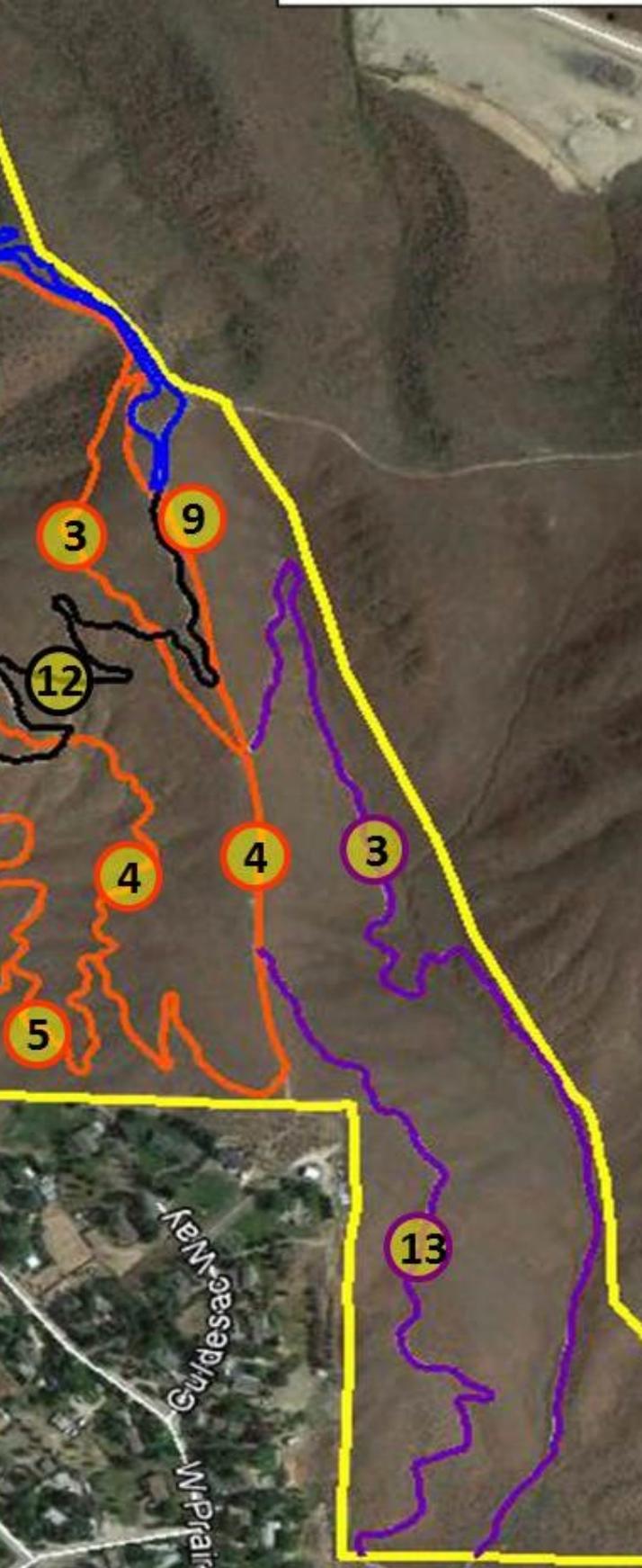
The following are some of the improvements we’ve already made along with additional items slated for the near future at the **Ada County Bike Park & Public Recreation Area**:

- Conducted comprehensive trail condition assessment, site assessment, and photo inventory
- Prepared Custom Soil Resource Report for property using USDA-NRCS Web Soil Survey
- Gathered input from the Ada County Parks, Open Space and Trails Advisory Board, City of Eagle Parks staff, Boise Area Mountain Bike Association (BAMBA), Southwest Idaho Mountain Biking Association (SWIMBA), Ridge to Rivers, and Healthy Hills Initiative (HHI) regarding past management practices, strategies, and objectives
- Performed trail corridor weed maintenance on all trails with county staff and SILD crews
- Installed new carsonite trail markers and/or steel 4x4 trail posts with directional arrows and new trail name decals at 36 locations
- Installed steel 4x4 trail posts with new informational and safety signage at the entrance of each of the three downhill specific mountain bike trails
- Installed steel 4x4 trail posts with new informational and safety signage at the outlet of each of the three downhill specific mountain bike trails indicating “DOWNHILL MOUNTAIN BIKING ONLY”
- Installed carsonite and/or steel 4x4 trail posts with new safety signage with “EASY WAY AROUND” alternate routes at unique trail features and “YIELD” signage at existing crossings
- Purchased trail maintenance tools, equipment, and storage facility for organizing and leading volunteer trail maintenance efforts
- Purchased and planning fall installation of several segments of doweled two-rail fencing near trail crossings, junctions, and erosive areas to enhance safety and discourage trail braiding
- Planning completion of the “Flow Trail” and repair of existing intersection with “Junk Yard” trail





Ada County Bike Park & Public Recreation Area Trails Map



Ada County Property



Cross Country Trails

- 1 – Junk Yard
- 2 – Free Ride Connector
- 3 – Rabbit Run
- 4 – D's Chaos
- 5 – Twisted Sister
- 6 – Twisted Sister Connector
- 7 – Snoop Loop
- 8 – Low Rider
- 9 – Treasure View Traverse



**Downhill Only Mountain
Bike Trails (Intermediate)**

- 10 – Shake N' Bake
- 11 – Flow Trail (*unfinished)



**Downhill Only Mountain
Bike Trails (Expert)**

- 12 – Stormin' Mormon



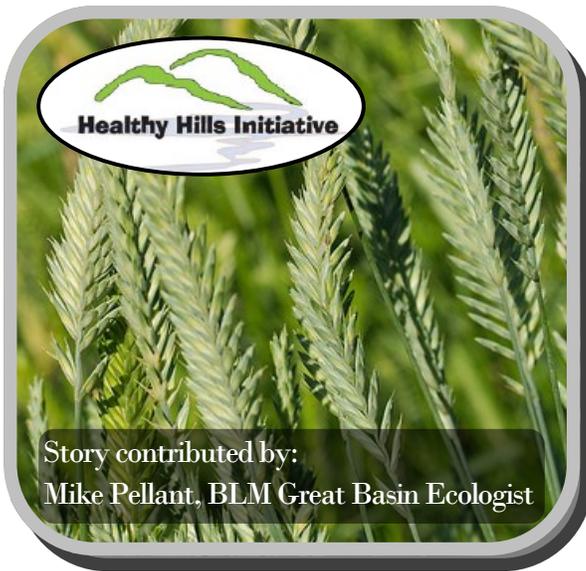
**Ridge to Rivers
Cross Country Trails**

- 3 – Rabbit Run
- 13 – REI Connection



HHI Native Plant Area

Promoting a Healthy Foothills Environment



The Healthy Hills Initiative (HHI) grew out of concerns after an August 3, 2009 wildfire that burned over 200 acres of the Hidden Hollow Landfill buffer area including much of the foothills at the Bike Park. The fire threatened homes and charred the vegetation at this popular outdoor recreation area.

This fire also illustrated the risk of wildfires in the foothills and started discussions on how to implement effective watershed restoration practices and ways to reduce wildfire hazard through the reduction of fine fuels. As a result, a group of interested land managers, scientists,

citizens and representatives from Ada County and the City of Eagle met to discuss a strategy to reduce the likelihood of foothills wildfires and their threats to homeowners and impacts to the environment. This group started HHI with a mission to: **“Provide science-based knowledge to protect and enhance natural resources of Boise Foothills ecosystems through the collaboration of private, local, state and federal organizations.”**

They agreed that the best way to accomplish this mission was to develop a program that addressed:

- Reducing the potential for wildfires in the Boise foothills by managing the vegetation and combating invasive weeds
- Demonstrating restoration strategies to restore native vegetation to benefit wildlife, the watershed and the citizens who use and enjoy this area
- Providing educational opportunities to students of all ages in the ecology, management and scientific study of foothills ecosystems



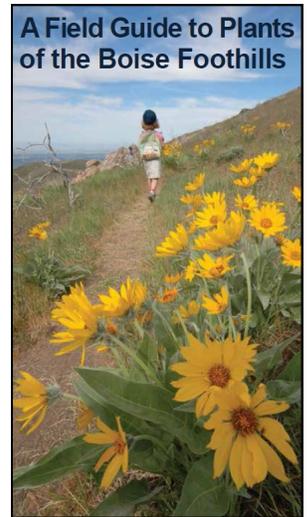
Since 2009, HHI has been responsible for implementing numerous projects to meet these goals on Ada County and City of Eagle land. One of the first efforts was to rehabilitate the 10 miles of fireline that was bladed as part of the fire suppression efforts on the 2009 wildfire. A mixture of native and fire resistant plants were seeded and have been successfully established which has reduced the potential for future fires in the area. Another post-fire rehabilitation project was the planting of over 8,000 bitterbrush seedlings by 200 volunteers organized by the Idaho Department of Fish & Game.

HHI has also been working on a **native plant demonstration area** at the Bike Park (see map previous page) over the past four years with a goal of establishing a natural plant community that is representative of the foothills ecosystem before invasive plants and frequent wildfires degraded the natural system. It is a challenging task given the dominance of cheatgrass and medusahead wildrye and the negative effects these nonnative grasses have on native plant communities.



We have already accomplished several HHI educational goals including the design and installation of 8 **interpretive signs at the Bike Park** thanks to a grant from the Idaho Firewise program. The signs help educate the public about fires, invasive plants, erosion, native plants, and rare plant species. Last year we also completed **“A Field Guide to Plants of the Boise Foothills”** — a pocket guide that provides information and pictures of 74 of

the more common native and invasive grasses, shrubs, and forbs found in the Lower Foothills. This guide is available for a little over \$6 at both Bureau of Land Management offices in Boise, D&B Supply on Glenwood, and Madeline George Nursery off Hill Road. All proceeds from sales of the guide are used to produce more editions as supplies run out. The guide is also available for download at no cost on the HHI website.



In addition, HHI members have led **classes on foothills restoration** and land health assessment and recently started a Foothills Field Workshop — a series that will continue next spring with workshops posted on the HHI website.

In the future HHI will continue to work with Ada County and the City of Eagle on implementing restoration and fuels management demonstration areas and promoting educational opportunities at the Bike Park and beyond. A project in the early stages of development is a web-based foothills planning tool that will incorporate soil information, native plant communities, fire resistant plants, and landscape factors into an easy to use interface designed to help local governments, developers, agencies and individuals to plan restoration or fire resistant fuel break projects in the foothills.

Learn more about HHI and healthy foothills ecology on the web at: www.healthyhills.org



SWEET! Now we'll have even more...

ROOM to ROAM



Story contributed by:
David Gordon, Ridge to Rivers Trail Coordinator

The addition of numerous trails in the Hillside to Hollow area as well as in the Daniels/Dry Creek drainages means that Ada County **trail users will have even more options when deciding where to run, ride or hike.** After a 10-month planning process incorporating significant public input, the City of Boise (as the Lead Coordinating Partner for Ridge to Rivers) and the Land Trust of the Treasure Valley are close to a final Master Plan for the Hillside to Hollow Reserve. **This will add almost 11 miles to the Ridge to Rivers trail system** including steep ridgeline routes and classic cross-country trails, with numerous loop opportunities and expansive views of the Treasure Valley. Work to bring these trails on to the Ridge to Rivers system will commence next spring.

More great news includes the generous, community-minded decision **creating easements for 3 trails that provide significant connectivity in the mid and upper foothills.** The easements are for existing yet unofficial trails (including “Sweet Connie” pictured above) through private property owned by Daniel’s Creek Land LLC, which is a subsidiary of Grossman Company Properties. Daniel’s Creek covers 3,284 acres between Cartwright Rd. and Bogus Basin Rd. and is the largest contiguous private land holding in the Boise Foothills. When completed, these easements provided to the City of Boise for the Ridge to Rivers trail system will allow for links from the Polecat Gulch trails west to Hidden Springs, and north up to Freddie’s Stack Rock Loop. **This adds approximately 12.6 total new trail miles.** Using Ridge to Rivers trail crews, contractor assistance, and a large volunteer effort, construction work will commence on trail improvements early next summer.



Parks and Education

With our department office located in Barber Park we get a good glimpse on a daily basis of how our visitors use our Ada County facilities for all kinds of outdoor recreation. It's not everyday, however, that we have the opportunity to see our patrons using our facilities for **outdoor education** as well.

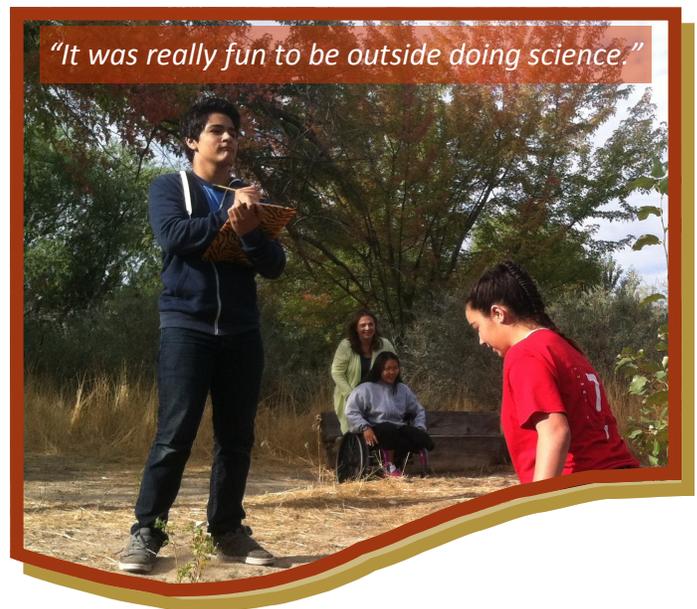


But that's just what **Mrs. April York and her 7th and 8th grade students from Calvary Christian School in Boise** were doing for a few days in September. Mrs. York and her Life Science class visited Barber Park to conduct riparian assessments and to collect water quality samples from the Boise River. Their study of water quality was part of a larger inventory that began up at Lucky Peak and moved down the river into more residential and urbanized areas. As they evaluated all manner of data from the water samples including nitrates, bacteria, pH, dissolved oxygen, and pesticides the students attempted to answer certain questions about the Boise River watershed including:

- How does the quality of the riparian zone affect the temperature, turbidity, and overall quality of the water?
- Does the quality of the water change as the river moves through more residential and urbanized areas?

Mrs. York chose Barber Park because the wide riparian zone and mature vegetation in the western portion of our park is more of a wildlife reserve as opposed to a residential or urban setting. The trail access along the river is also convenient and ideal for achieving her class objectives. Hopefully her students appreciate how lucky they are to have a teacher willing to go the extra mile to encourage **hands-on learning outside the classroom**. Keep up the good work Mrs. York!

Of course we welcome the use of Ada County parks, open space and trails for any outdoor learning experience and we hope to provide more educational opportunities for teachers and students in the future. For now, thanks to all of our visitors and facility users for your continued support and interest in Ada County Parks & Waterways!



Ada County Parks & Waterways

Photo Contest

Celebrate the Sesquicentennial

Help celebrate Ada County's 150th Anniversary by sharing your favorite photos from our parks, trails, and waterways

Submit your photos (past or present!)
for the chance to be featured in the next issue of Current!

Photos must be submitted between October 1st - December 22nd

Send photos to: parks@adaweb.net

*Include name, date taken, location, and category for each photo

Eligible photo locations:

Barber Park (including Event Center), Lucky Peak Lake, Ada County Bike Park, Boise River (float stretch), Boise River Greenbelt (Discovery to Barber Park), Hubbard Reservoir, Oregon Trail (Hwy 21 to Columbia Rd.), Fivemile/Victory Wetland, Snake River Water Trail, or any Ridge to Rivers Trail

Judging Categories:

Landscape/Scenic, Wildlife, Action, Human Interest, Abstract/Close-up



4049 Eckert Road
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Ada County

1864 **150** 2014

Sesquicentennial

