

Mapping the Portolá Trail

Fray Crespi's diary was first edited by his Franciscan superiors seeking brevity. Overtime, his navigational observations and general historical competence have been questioned. Nonetheless, his diary notes are more descriptive than any other source associated with the Portolá expedition. This paper depends upon at least four Crespi translations and editing variations, namely those of Eldredge (1909), Bolton (1927), Stanger and Brown (1969) and Brown (2001), for descriptive information from which campsite locations can be deduced. Although this approach is selecting from several sources, the goal of utilizing the descriptions as a guide to the probable location of campsites and, in between, trail routing has been enhanced as the number of sources was expanded. Moreover, none of the previous translators/editors had in mind a recreation of a Portolá Trail. The basis for the "educated guess" assumptions are therefore annotated for scholarship purposes.

The maps are included so as to provide local orientation for those with interest in Portolá and his expedition. They are also a necessary exhibit if petition is made to include a Portolá Trail within the San Mateo County Trails Plan. According to the County rules, published as part of the Master Trails Plan in 1999, the County will only consider additional trail designations if right of way, easement, or existing public rights of way are made available.

The maps for a proposed 50+ mile Portolá Trail are presented in conventional north (San Francisco Bay Discovery Site) to south order (Año Nuevo State Park). They are of

consistent scale and graphic scales are included on several maps themselves. This north to south order is opposite from the direction of Portolá's initial march and the numbering of the expedition's camps reflects the northward progress in October and November of 1769. This "educated guess" route, always subject to interpretation, is shown as a continuous yellow line (labeled Portolá 1769 Trail). The tentative, subject to review and adoption, designation of a Portolá Trail route is also intended to be continuous but is shown in multi-colors so that the right of way or easement providers can be readily identified. The maps themselves are a reduction from US Geological Survey quadrangle sheets.



