South Fork of Little Butte Creek Area

Naming Proposals

Presented by Dr. Alice G. Knotts

INTRODUCTION

We begin by thanking the Oregon Geographic Names Board for its careful work exhibited and accomplished in recent years for naming geographical features in the State of Oregon. We have identified some physical features in the area of the South Fork of Little Butte Creek located in Jackson County and put forth name suggestions and proposals. We believe that most of them are located on public lands of the U.S. Forest Service or the BLM, but the Knotts Cliff is on private land.
Naming Proposals for the South Fork of Little Butte Creek Area

Identified in geographic order of approach from Medford, the road up the South Fork of Little Butte Creek and the Soda Springs trail 1009 that follows upstream Dead Indian Creek that is proposed to be named Latgawa Creek.

1. Hole-in-the-Rock Name a rock arch located on top of a hill NW of Poole Hill. Hole-in-the-Rock has been recorded on a BLM map but not with GNIS.

2. Pilgrim Cave Name a rock shelf with ancient campfire smoked walls.
   A shelter for travelers for thousands of years.

3. Knotts Bluff Name a cliff that defines the northern side of a canyon through which runs the S. Fork of Little Butte Creek.

4. Ross Point Name a prominent point on Knotts Cliff above the cave.

5. Latgawa Pinnacles Name a group of rocky pinnacles located near Camp Latgawa.

6. Marjorie Falls Name a water slide on Latgawa Creek upstream from the soda springs.

These proposals are a work in progress and considered part of a team effort to work with the Oregon Geographic Names Board, the U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management and other interested parties.
Consultants and References

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Ed Dahak, old-timer, rancher, resident of Eagle Point, OR    RE: Hole-in-the-Rock

Southern Oregon Historical Society

Geographic Names Information System website

Google Maps


Photos courtesy of Alice Knotts and Joe Knotts
USGS Map of the overview area, 1891

The South Fork of Little Butte Creek can be located on maps showing the highlighted white area between Crater Lake and California, Klamath Falls and Ashland. The area shows tributaries east of Medford.
The South Fork of Little Butte Creek Road follows the creek upstream from the left, crossing the vertical line boundary where public lands begin and continue to the right. The road terminates at the confluence with Dead Indian Creek where the Fish Lake Road zig zags up the hill to the north and Poole Hill Road (Owens Road) takes off to the west and, after a hairpin turn, climbs south toward Conde Creek Road and the Dead Indian Memorial Highway.

Dead Indian Creek flows north from Buck Prairie and, on this map, comes from the south and joins the South Fork of Little Butte Creek at a confluence in the canyon. The sites for naming are all within four miles of this point by
The arch (above), bluff (below), falls (right), and (bottom) the route up Dead Indian Creek to the falls.
Latgawa Pinnacles
Marjorie Falls
The naming proposals and discussion concern geographic features either in the area covered by the map on the previous page or are located nearby to the west (the arch) or northwest (the bluff, point and cave).

The Hole-in-the-Rock arch sits below the top of the hill, on the knob on the far left side of the map.

Proposed Knotts Bluff follows the South Fork of Little Butte Creek downstream to the northwest of Grizzly Canyon, up Grizzly Canyon and up Little Butte Creek to the southeast. Approximate area outlined. Ross Point is marked with a star.
1. **Hole-in-the-Rock**

Name for the first time a natural rock arch located on a hill overlooking the South Fork of Little Butte Creek. It has been called “hole-in-the-rock,” “the needles’ eye,” and now more commonly by occasional hikers, “the arch.” It is located on BLM land.

The proposed name: Hole-in-the-Rock.
To formally name the arch using a name that has been used locally and on a BLM map.

For decades, if not centuries, people have taken cross country paths to reach this rock, take in the views, and the more adventurous climb over the top of the arch. From end to end the exterior of the arch extends approximately 70 feet. In the 1950s and 1960s, I remember hearing it called the Needle’s Eye. Growing up in Ashland in the same decades, Jeff LaLande heard it called Hole-in-the-Rock. Today hikers more commonly call it Arch Rock. Beware of rattlesnakes and poison oak on the hike.

Location: Township 37, Range 3 East, Sections 17-18.
Ross Knotts and Joe Knotts cross the arch.

The hike to Hole-in-the-Rock begins from Owens Road along Soda Creek. You can access Hole-in-the-Rock from BLM land about 1/3 mile up Soda Creek from the South Fork of Little Butte Creek Road. Follow deer trails through poison oak and forest at lower elevations. Travel .9 mile to the top of the ridge to find Hole-in-the-Rock.
The view looking through Hole-in-the-Rock to the southeast.

View looking down from the top of the Hole-in-the-Rock.
GPS Waypoint Locations

2. Pilgrim Cave, dot along road, center right.
3. Knotts Bluff, from the U.S. Forest Service boundary east almost to Fish Lake Road.
4. Ross Point, located on top of cliff east northeast of Pilgrim Cave.
5. Latgawa Pinnacles, cluster of red dots at right north of the South Fork of Little Butte Creek.
6. Marjorie Falls. See additional waypoint map to follow.
Land Ownership Map

Rogue River National Forest map, US Department of Agriculture, 1994
2. **Pilgrim Cave**

Name a geologic formation, known locally as “the cave,” that is a lava-formed rock shelf at the base of the point proposed to be named Ross Point. Pilgrim Cave is located adjacent to the US Forest Service road 2438.

This cave was visited over many thousands of years as shelter by earlier peoples. It may have been used during cold or stormy weather, on hunting or food gathering trips, or by people on their way to or from the soda springs. It is a small shelter with a fire pit under the cliff overhead. The cave has been researched for artefacts previously.

The name is selected to represent people who passed by on a journey and people who continue to visit this destination to learn about our heritage. A pilgrim is a person on a journey that has a purpose, one for which the journey itself has meaning or spiritual benefit. It is our hope that people coming to this cave would come with the intent of being more in touch with the lives of the people who lived in this area for thousands of years before history was written.

Smoke-stained columns outside the rock shelf
Topo map waypoint (red dot) provides the precise location of Pilgrim Cave on the South Fork of Little Butte Creek Road near the mouth of Grizzly Canyon.
3. **Knotts Bluff**

Name a large cliff nearly a mile long located along the U.S. Forest Service road that follows the South Fork of Little Butte Creek to Camp Latgawa. We know of no name for this cliff. The cliff is not easily viewed from the road unless one is looking for it. It begins shortly after the USFS sign where the gravel road begins.

The proposed name: Knotts Bluff. To be named in memory of Ross and Marjorie Knotts for their leadership and service to the people of the Rogue Valley. The name also derives from an old English term “knott,” meaning hill. This name is a play on words because Ross Knotts enjoyed humor that involved making a bluff.
Views of Knotts Bluff
Knotts Bluff
In an approximate rectangle shape, the cliff follows Road 2438 starting at the boundary with US Forest Service land and continues from NW to SE for about half a mile including Grizzly Canyon and continuing southeast almost ½ mile further.

ABOUT THE NAME KNOTTS
Three letters of recommendation describe the meaning of the Knotts name. One is below and two are appended. In summary, Ross Knotts (1912-2010) and Marjorie Cooley Knotts (1919-2014), provided key leadership behind Camp Latgawa, the Rogue Valley Manor and many, many Rogue Valley organizations. Avid outdoor enthusiasts, they hiked to all the places to be named and led others on hikes to these places.

Marjorie Knotts walking at Camp Latgawa in 2009 at age 90.
United Methodist Camp & Retreat Ministries
Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference
1505 SW 18th Avenue
Portland, OR 97201
(503) 802-9211 or 1-800-593-7539 x211

Oregon Geographic Names Board
Oregon Historical Society
1200 S.W. Park Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97206

March 29, 2019

Dear Board Members:

As former Executive Director of Camp and Retreat Ministries of Oregon-Idaho Conference of The United Methodist Church, I write to recommend the naming of certain geological features in memory of Ross and Marjorie Knotts, community pillars in the Rogue Valley whose service spanned the years 1952-2010. I met the Knotts in conjunction with my work overseeing the management of Camp Latgawa, located in the upper Rogue Valley watershed where Dead Indian Creek flows into the South Fork of Little Butte Creek.

In 1953, Ross and Marjorie Knotts, who had been searching for an outdoor education and retreat site, located the present Camp Latgawa site and arranged for its lease from the U.S. Forest Service. They were instrumental in bringing campers and leaders, programming and volunteers, to improve the facilities and provide life-changing experiences for thousands of youth and adults over five subsequent decades. Ross garnered support from all around southern Oregon. Marjorie planned and led retreats and programs, organized and led Shakespearean camps. Concerned about Oregon history, she researched with tribal leaders and educated to change the name of the camp from Dead Indian to Latgawa, to remember the people of the upland water source.

Ross and Marjorie were also avid hikers who traveled multiple times to all of the areas whose names are under your consideration from this Latgawa and upper Rogue area. With permission from rancher Ed Dayhawk, Ross hiked to the base of a cliff, to our knowledge unnamed, the one we propose to name Knotts Cliff. Season by season, Marjorie identified tiny wildflowers by the cliff. The cliff, ranging from 50’ to 100’ in height, extends approximately one mile in length from western U.S. Forest Service property boundary eastward to Grizzly Canyon. The last leg of the road up the South Fork of Little Butte Creek to Camp Latgawa lies between the cliff and the creek. Camp Latgawa lies just beyond across the creek on the right. The size of the feature is appropriate to the imprint in the Rogue Valley left by the lives of Ross and Marjorie Knotts.

Ross Knotts was a son of Oregon, born in Junction City in 1911, a graduate of The Dailies High School and Williams University who worked summer jobs in Rogue Valley pear orchards when his family lived in Medford. He married Marjorie Cooley, daughter of a streetcar driver from Sellwood, and a graduate with honors from Washington High School in Portland. They shared a common life goal to spend their lives in service to others, being kind and loving to all.

The Knotts lived in Ashland, Phoenix and Medford for about forty years and were known and respected by people from Takilma, Cave Junction, Grants Pass, Merlin, Rogue River, Gold Hill, Central Point, Medford, Jacksonville, Applegate, Phoenix, Talent, Ashland, Eagle Point, Shady Cove and Trail. Ross Knotts served churches in five of those communities. Marjorie started handbell ringing groups that performed in most of these towns.

Ross and Marjorie Knotts were outstanding because of the ways they developed systems to train and deploy people in caring for one another. The result was that people valued being part of caring
communities and volunteered their time and money to help keep them that way. Camp Latgawa was one significant piece of that picture—a place where people were inspired and trained for leadership.

Wanting better life for elderly persons than was available in the 1950s in southern Oregon, Ross Knotts convened representatives of churches throughout the Medford area and garnered support to form a board that developed and built the Rogue Valley Manor. He served as President and then as a member of the board while the Manor grew from a dream into a solid and stable reality. His father was one of the first residents. Marjorie and Ross lived there for 24 years. Ross served on the Residents Council as Vice-Chair and Chair.

Ross Knotts was instrumental in reaching out to the Takilma community in Oregon, especially during the 1970s, and getting a grant that opened the first medical clinic in that area. Meanwhile, Marjorie Knotts learned Spanish, graduated from Southern Oregon University, and taught in the Phoenix-Talent School District. She helped to organize free dental care evenings for farm workers and their families in the Talent area. She translated contracts, insurance forms, and driver exams, and helped enroll children in school. She stayed in touch with families who stabilized and raised children who graduated from college or became hard working and contributing members of society in southern Oregon.

One responsibility of a pastor was to receive visits from people down on their luck who might go from one church to another asking for groceries or money for gas, heating bills, or a motel stay. It was hard to know who had genuine need and who was a con, who was asking one time or who was working the system. Ross Knotts helped an ecumenical group of pastors organize CERVS to provide one-stop service to help meet these needs. It continues today under a new name.

Ross and Marjorie met at the invitation of some of their friends to form the Rogue Valley Chapter of Habitat for Humanity. Those of you familiar with the program know that volunteers build houses for low income families, but, in addition, there is much support for those families, too. Marge served on the selection committee, going to garages and trailers where families lived in poverty, meeting with applicants. She translated contracts, insurance forms, and driver exams, and helped enroll children in school. She stayed in touch with families who stabilized and raised children who graduated from college or became hard working and contributing members of society in southern Oregon.

Over time, Ross Knotts paid many visits to inmates in jail. One would refer another, and as they were released, he helped them get their lives straightened out and back on track. He was a logical choice to serve as a member of the citizen’s committee that oversaw the construction of the present jail in Medford. Once the jail was built, he served as a volunteer chaplain and was ribbed for spending time in jail.

These activities were in addition to full time clergy responsibilities that included marrying and burying people over multiple decades and developing ties with people without a faith practice as well as with those of other religious persuasions. In their spare time, Ross and Marjorie attended concerts and supported the arts and theater, meeting people from all these walks of life. On hiking days they took roads less traveled and met ranchers, farmers, and people living in outpost cabins.

It is with pride that I propose that Marjorie and Ross Knotts are worth remembering with a cliff named in their memory. I add two more parts to this recommendation. First that the highest point of the cliff at its end nearest Medford be called Ross Point. Ross is a Scottish term meaning promontory, and it suits the rock formation. Second is that a waterfall located upstream on Dead Indian (Latgawa) Creek be named Marjorie Falls. There is a story about this.

In the 1950s, Ross and Marjorie went hiking to look for the little known falls. There was no trail leading upstream from the sode spring, so they clambered over large rolling rocks, fallen trees, and slippery rocks in the stream. Marjorie had poor balance stemming from childhood illness and loss of hearing in one ear. Further, the big toe on her right foot crossed over the top of her next two toes, decreasing her ability to balance. She slipped and fell multiple times on her way to the falls. With assistance, she made the quarter mile distance and enjoyed sitting on a large rock by the pool in the creek watching the beautiful cascading water. Her reputation for taking falls and needing assistance in crossing creeks did not stop
her from her love of hiking many trails in Oregon. Nevertheless, she continued to hike. The Knotts family
swears that at age 85 Ross Knotts set the record for being the oldest person to go over the falls.

These days many campers hike to the falls. The most adventurous ones climb a cliff to the top of the
falls, slide over, and drop some 15' into the pool below. The falls have become one of the signature
photos for Camp Latgawa.

It would be possible to name these falls Latgawa Falls because this name goes along with Latgawa
Creek. But so does the name Marjorie Falls, to honor a woman who devoted over fifty years to leadership
of Camp Latgawa and gave devoted leadership in southern Oregon in a time when lives of women,
including Marjorie, were overshadowed by recognition given to men. You can make the naming decision.

Ross Knotts died in 2010 and Marjorie Knotts passed away in 2014. I believe that they are people worth
noting with Oregon geological naming.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for more reflections as you work through the naming process. I am
more than glad to be of assistance.

Sincerely,

Lisa Jean Hoefner

The Rev. Dr. Lisa Jean Hoefner
Pastor, Kings Beach UMC and Retreat Ministries
4. **Ross Point**

Name a high definitive point on Knotts Bluff directly north of the cave. The proposed name: Ross Point. To be named for Ross Knotts. “Ross” is a Scottish term for a promontory, a high point of land that juts out.

Seen from the road below, the highest point of rock on the cliff mentioned above is the most majestic feature. It looks like a fortress or castle.

Ross Knotts was known for his avid commitment to hiking and his desire to go to the highest point, a metaphor for his life and ethics.
5. **Latgawa Pinnacles**

Name a cluster of about five cone-shaped rock pinnacles located on the north side of the South Fork of Little Butte Creek across the creek from Camp Latgawa. This cluster of cone-shaped rocks tops out about as high as the tall trees around them. The pinnacles are one adventure destination for campers.

There are about five pinnacles in the cluster.

Ross Knotts took this picture of hikers atop the highest pinnacle.
Latgawa Pinnacles
The pinnacles are directly below the big curve with a flat turnout in the Fish Lake Road that once was used by the US Forest Service as a heliport. Watch out for rattlesnakes.
Marjorie Falls

Name a waterfall located on Dead Indian Creek (to be renamed Latgawa Creek). We know of no name for this waterfall.

The proposed name: Marjorie Falls.
The water does not free fall through the air but falls instead over rock.

To be named for Marjorie Knotts who helped organized camp programming at Camp Latgawa for fifty years and whose bio is provided. The name is a play on words because, due to foot and ear injuries and poor balance, Marjorie often fell while hiking. It is a metaphor for her life that she continued to hike. The name has a lilting sound like the falling water.
This waypoint map of the Soda Springs, located on Dead Indian Creek, at the very bottom shows the location of Marjorie Falls marked with a red dot.
The swimming hole has been used for years.
Campers have made a trail to this falls, located upstream about a quarter mile from the Soda Spring that used to have 1930s rock work around it. Each spring the pool below the falls is cleared so that people can climb rocks to the top of the falls, sit in the creek, and slide over the falls. In the 1950s the falls were about 15 feet high. Now they are about 12 feet high.
Archaeological Notes

Camp Latgawa and the US Forest Service land around it may provide a site for future archaeological exploration. When Dead Indian Creek had a huge flood, perhaps 40 years ago, it washed out a new creek bed alongside the camp and turned up a mortar and pestal that may have gone to Southern Oregon University. That area was bulldozed for flood protection. Whatever arrowheads and scrapers were found have been provided to the Southern Oregon Historical Society with articles given by Marjorie Knotts. These join memorabilia from the Ross Knotts collection that did not include Indian artefacts.

APPENDICES

Index

1. References
   Sarah Lynch, Executive Director of Rogue Valley Manor
   Shirley Grimes, Life-long friend of Ross and Marjorie Knotts
   and resident of Medford, Oregon
   Short biographical sketches of Ross Knotts and Marjorie Knotts

2. Camp Latgawa photos

3. Social History and Naming of Camp Latgawa

4. Historic correspondence about naming Camp Latgawa, 1979-1982
   Indian Student Services
   Marjorie Knotts
References

Oregon Geographic Names Board  
Oregon Historical Society  
1200 SW Park Avenue  
Portland, Oregon 97205

April 16, 2019

Dear Board Members:

From the time I interviewed for a job at the Rogue Valley Manor, I felt as though I had found a caring community. Daily practices of caring and kindness are integral to the way the Rogue Valley Manor treats its residents and employees. I believe that this reflects the values upon which the Manor was founded by Ross Knotts and the team of people he gathered. They stepped out in faith, even before the resources were in view, because of their desire to provide excellent care for seniors.

When it comes to the proposal to name Knotts Cliff, I know it can be important to place Ross Knotts in that location, hiking under and around the cliff on the South Fork of Little Butte Creek Road. Indeed, he and Marjorie Knotts hiked most of the Rogue Valley. Yet far more than their hiking lies behind this naming proposal.

Who they were, what they stood for and what they did was so significant for the lives of many people in southern Oregon that it deserves permanent public recognition by the State of Oregon. For this reason, I support this proposal to name Knotts Cliff after them. The location proposed is excellent to recognize more than half a century of leadership that they gave to Camp Latgawa, located just past that cliff at the confluence of two creeks. I write to testify to the high esteem in which the Rogue Valley Manor holds them.

Ross and Marge were living at the Rogue Valley Manor when I met them in 2003. They were truly a class act, as individuals and as partners. They were inclusive, caring, and unassuming. Not only were they great listeners, they were terrific story tellers. Ross and Marge were people that you just want to know and want to be around. I observed how they interacted with others, and what I witnessed was a set of skills cultivated over a lifetime that helped new people feel welcome, that opened the door to friendship, and that treated others with respect.

The Manor appreciated Ross Knotts for his pioneering commitment to the development of continuing life care, or healthcare all the way to the end of life. Many people fear that no
one will be around to care for them at the end. They fear that care will lack good standards, quality, kindness and respect. Seniors fear becoming disabled and put aside.
Step back with me to 1953 when Knotts was pastor at First United Methodist Church in Ashland. Convinced that widows living alone, isolated and at risk of falling, and elder citizens living in degrading conditions deserved excellent care to the end of their lives, Ross Knotts, a team builder, gathered church leaders from the Medford area and mustered support for a retirement center that offered affordable care to the end of life. It was a new idea circulating in the United States.
Continuing care was the catalyst for founding the Rogue Valley Manor that opened in 1961. The Manor sold apartment units even before groundbreaking. Knotts inspired the first Manor executive to serve for two years without pay just to get the retirement center launched. He encouraged the Manor through financial difficulties when people receiving good food, companionship and care outlived all expectations in the financial projections, driving down the cash flow. Knotts helped create a fund to provide life care for residents who outlived their personal funds. Good management placed the Manor back on track.

Currently, nearly 1000 residents call the Rogue Valley Manor home. The Manor has a variety of living accommodations ranging from independent living to in-home care, residential living, memory support, and skilled nursing care. The dream that became reality has forever changed the Rogue Valley, providing jobs and stability for families as well as care for residents.

Today, more than 120 resident interest groups enhance life at the Rogue Valley Manor. Among them is one of the early groups started by Marjorie Knotts who backed Ross at every undertaking. She launched a group of Rogue Valley Manor Handbell Ringers, often training people in music skills. She set up the special equipment needed for ringing, bought music, sewed handbell table covers, sewed matching outfits, and coordinated performances with majour music events in the valley. She took ringers to other states to attend English handbell festivals and receive training. Knotts helped create among handbell ringers the same spirit of community that builds a good sports team or bonds singers for a well-tuned choral performance. Each person feels needed, appreciated and contributes to a greater good.

Across the Rogue Valley, Ross and Marge Knotts helped cultivate a community spirit of caring. I can wholeheartedly support the naming of Knotts Cliff and the additional recognition that would come with naming Marjorie Falls and Ross Point.

Sincerely,

Sarah Lynch
Executive Director, Rogue Valley Manor
REV. ROSS AND MARGE KNOTTS

Shirley Grimes
2546 St Charles Way
Medford, Oregon 97504

Oregon Geographic Names Board
Oregon Historical Society
1200 S.W. Park Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97205

March 26, 2019

Dear Board Members:

I write in support of the proposals before you to provide new names for geological features in the South Fork of the Little Butte Creek area to recognize the heritage that they have, especially from the contributions of Ross and Marjorie Knotts to southern Oregon and Camp Latgawa. Ross and Marge were genuine, caring people who served a large congregation and people all over the Rogue Valley. To let you know more about what kind of people these were, I share personal memories.

Whenever I hear the names Rev. Ross and Marge Knotts I immediately conjure up their faces and many memories. I first met Ross at First Methodist Church in Medford when I was 10 or 11 years old (1960’s). Already his father was legendary as a pastor in this same church, helping many people at the end of the Great Depression and leading camping programs. Ross lived in Medford with his family. Ross had been a pastor in Ashland and helped to start Camp Latgawa and the Rogue Valley Manor. I knew he was known as a “famous minister” but didn’t really get to know him until 1978.

That was the year he married my husband and me. He laughed when I told him I always thought he was “famous.” Our wedding day was a double blessing when my husband’s grandparents walked into the sanctuary before the ceremony and Ross went up to meet them. I clearly remember him saying “Well, Charlie and Lilly, what are you doing here?” Little did we know that Ross’s father, Rev. Joe Knotts, had married Larry’s grandparents!” To finish this part of the story, Ross,
with Marge by his side, again had a renewal of vows for us on our 25th anniversary. He said that was a first in all his years of ministry.

I considered Ross to be My Minister. He was the one who helped me understand the death of my father when he passed at the age of 35. Ross changed my spirit and I was no longer mad at God for taking Daddy. I have seen him with teenagers talking and crying together as he worked out problems with them.

Larry was going through a time when he wanted to learn more about what each scripture meant. He said Ross told him and took him to the collection of Berkley’s commentaries. He was always there for Larry when he needed a deeper understanding of what he was studying.

Marge is the one who brought out a “gift” that I didn’t know I had. She was the person that brought English Handbells to my church and taught me how to ring them in my mid-20’s. I knew a little bit about music, but she led me to be brave enough to teach and direct the children of the church as well!

Larry and I had a weekly Bible Study in our home for 3 years. We had three lay leaders. Ross would come in and just sit. He told us he needed to be renewed with a study also. He asked us to pretend he wasn’t there – but would always answer a question if we could not find the answer ourselves. Marge would sometimes appear with him.

Ross and Marge both were involved in so many community activities—helping those down and out, serving with Habitat for Humanity, and attending concerts where they strengthened friendships with those in the audience and on stage. I admired their energy, love, compassion, inclusiveness, intellect, and patience.

I served as administrative secretary at First United Methodist Church in Medford during a time when Ross was pastor. He was organized, active in the community and a preacher who inspired people to reach higher. He visited sick and shut-ins. In his eighties he volunteered to coordinate games for a pre-teen youth group. He always knew young people by name and encouraged them in wholesome living.

I was very pleased when the Dead Indian Church Camp name changed to Camp Latgawa! “Dead Indian” is a rather strange sounding name for a place. I attended
the Dead Indian Camp with that name from 7th grade through 12th. Ross and Marge often were leaders or counselors during that time.

As an adult I attended retreats at Camp Latgawa for Church School class reunions, Bell Choir practices for concerts, Family camps, Marriage Encounter retreat. I believe the name was changed in my early adulthood in the 1980s. So many people have hiked, biked, meditated, prayed, played, grown in spirit, changed their lives by being at or around Camp Latgawa. For me, this happened especially when the Knotts were leaders.

The naming and re-naming of the places that have been in so many lives, would be an honorable blessing to Ross and Marge Knotts—who gave so much and created so many memories.

Sincerely,

Shirley Grimes
A Short Bio for J. Ross Knotts

The death of J. Ross Knotts on April 26, 2010 prompts a celebration of his life of 98 years. He was born on March 20, 1912, in Junction City, Oregon and lived in Marshfield, Cottage Grove, Grants Pass, Roseburg and The Dalles. He became an honors graduate of Willamette University in Salem and of Drew Theological Seminary in Madison, NJ. From 1937 to 1978 he served as a pastor of United Methodist churches in Oregon. He started out at Odell and Pine Grove. In 1943, while pastoring St. Johns Pioneer (Portland), he married Marjorie Cooley Knotts. Together they served as lifetime partners in ministry in Bend, Ashland, Springfield and Medford. Since 1967 they lived in the Rogue Valley. Following official retirement he continued in ministry at Gold Hill-Upper Rogue and Talent, and was interim at Ashland Congregational Church (UCC).

The Rev. Knotts’ authentic concern for young people blossomed in his leadership of youth programs that encouraged generations to raise families rooted in positive values. He was known for his compassion and leadership in providing human services through the founding of Rogue Valley Manor, CERVS, and Habitat for Humanity. He served prisoners through the Jackson County Jail (planning, pastoral care) and obtained a grant for a medical clinic at Takilma.

His passion for justice encouraged fair treatment and open doors to opportunity for all. His ministry included support for the rights of minorities—Japanese Americans, African Americans, shipyard workers, refugees, homeless persons, families suffering from lumber mill closures, migrants, hippies, gay men and lesbians. He was a lifelong advocate for peace and justice.

As a United Methodist pastor whose larger parish was the Rogue Valley, he provided ministries that saw multiple generations through marriage, birth, death, and life changes. He was known for his abilities as a preacher and teacher who opened up the meaning of the Bible to many, his work with young people in youth group and camp settings, and his capacity to be hopeful and lead into the future. He is remembered for campfire songs and stories and his love of hymns and music.

Knotts treasured nature and the environment. He grew vegetable gardens, explored back roads and hiked trails all over southern Oregon, at times knowing where to find lost hikers. He climbed mountains and, at age 88, set a record for sliding over the falls near Camp Latgawa.
Marjorie Cooley Knotts passed away August 5, 2014 in Medford. She was born December 11, 1919, in Portland, Oregon. Christian faith forged her life and she was an active member of The United Methodist Church. She married The Rev. J. Ross Knotts and was a supportive pastor’s wife during their 67 years together. They had two children, Joe and Alice, and lived in Portland, Bend, Ashland and Springfield, before settling in Medford in 1968 and remaining there until 2010 and 2014, respectively.

Marge graduated *cum laude* from Southern Oregon University in 1970. She used her teaching credentials and Spanish degree to teach for the Phoenix-Talent School District and to educate adults in Medford. She earned the title Abuelita and worked closely with 13 Habitat for Humanity families.

Marge’s passion for peace and reconciliation and her love of nature characterized her many interests. She sought reconciliation for families with racial diversity and with gay or lesbian members, taught conflict resolution skills in camp and church settings, and brought music about peace and hope to the many handbell ringing groups that she started. A skilled organizer and educator, she led church youth groups, women’s retreats, and Shakespeare camps. She helped coordinate camp programming for the Oregon-Idaho Conference of The United Methodist Church. She gave all of this leadership and more as a volunteer because of her faith commitment to reach out to others in love and service.
Photos at Camp Latgawa

Marge and Ross Knotts at Camp Latgawa
Above: The old Tyrell House at Camp Latgawa. Below: a Natural Builders project
Social History and Naming of Camp Latgawa

Alice G. Knotts

From time immemorial, the soda springs located along what is known as Dead Indian Creek in the Rogue Valley of southern Oregon have been considered to have restorative and healing properties. Known for perhaps 165 years as Dead Indian Soda Springs, the water is named for its distinctive chemical flavors that taste disgusting to some and delightful to others.

The peninsula located at the convergence of the South Fork of Little Butte Creek and Dead Indian Creek became a summer gathering point for native people for thousands of years as is marked with evidence of stone tools such as mortars and pestles, scrapers, pounding stones and a fire ring in a cave about two miles away.

Among several versions of the story of how the name Dead Indian came into use is this one, told around campfires. It was only when white settlers came to the area and were raising cattle, farming, and milling flour, and then trading goods between Klamath Falls and Ashland that the incident occurred from which the area, the creek, and the soda spring were named.

The Indians who held up a wagon train carrying sacks of flour dumped the flour and saved the flour sacks. They were then attacked by other Indians, and the ensuing conflict left at least two Indians dead.

For decades this story has been told and retold, usually at night beside the soda spring or around a campfire for dramatic effect, with persons prepared to jump out of the dark, whooping and hollering at the moment the storyteller describes the attack.

For perhaps half a century in the early 20th Century, the Tyrrell family operated a resort or spa on this peninsula of land owned by the U.S. Forest Service. People of the Rogue Valley came by wagon or by car and stayed in cabins that formed a large circle around the grounds. Some of the cabins had kitchens so that people could prepare their own meals. Some cabins were purchased by individual families, such as one of the few that remains standing that is known as Gorby Cottage. This one belonged to Ann Gorby, part of the Taylor family that belonged to First Methodist Church in Medford. The retreat site also had a large deep swimming pool located on the Poole Hill Road side beside Dead Indian Creek. Fishing was excellent in the two creeks. Two swings graced the center of camp not far from a large spreading maple tree under which people gathered in a circle of chairs for quiet time or conversation. Along Little Butte Creek were two long oval ponds fed with piped in fresh water from the creek.

Methodists from the Oregon Conference were forming extensive camping programs and developing sites such as Camp Magruder at Rockaway, Suttle Lake Camp on the Santiam Pass, and Wallowa Camp at Wallowa Lake. Joseph Knotts, a Methodist minister in Oregon who also lived in Medford, had helped pioneer the development of annual camping programs west of Salem known as Falls City Institute and provided leadership at Epworth League Institutes held in Ashland’s Lithia Park. When his son Ross Knotts became pastor of First Methodist Church in Ashland in 1952, he led a summer camp at Camp Myrtlewood, located along Myrtle Creek, and began to search for a suitable place for Methodists to build a church camp to serve the Rogue Valley.
It was a time in the life of denominations when churches provided cradle to grave care for members. These ministries extended into outdoor, campus, and community settings. Raising young people was a priority in response to the baby boom after World War II. Young adults became leaders and helped grow congregations and carry out their tasks. The typical age of marriage and starting a family was 21 for men and 18 for women. Young married people expected to be able to be part of a church that would support their children, help raise their youth, welcome and look after people to the end of their lives. Churches were like community centers where there were activities for all ages throughout the week. Summer camp helped people grow in their faith. It was also a place for meeting people from nearby towns, for cultivating friendships, for dating and falling in love.

The Methodist churches at Cave Junction, Grants Pass, Gold Hill, Medford, Talent and Ashland had a combined Sunday School attendance of about 750, about 250 in youth programs, and a church membership total of just under 3,000. They wanted a place to hold retreats for women’s groups, men’s groups, youth groups, membership classes and special events as well as age level week-long summer camps.

Ross Knotts scoured the valley for sites that would be suitable for water activities, outdoor education, volleyball and hiking, places for group accommodations, meal preparation, and accessibility year round. In August, 1953, he and Marge Knotts visited the Dead Indian Soda Springs spa and retreat site. The Tyrell’s were retiring and selling their interest in this location. The Knotts family worked with the local churches and with the camping ministries office of the Oregon Conference of The Methodist Church, proposing ways to fund the purchase of the lease from the U.S. Forest Service. By 1954 the first summer season of church camping was in place at the newly named Dead Indian Soda Springs Camp. Within a few summers, there were multiple camps for grades 4-6, 7-8, 9-12, work camps and family camps. With high school students working summers and families taking vacation dates, campers had a choice of weeks to attend.

With the exception of hiring a camp manager, cook, and cook’s assistant, the camps were staffed entirely by volunteers. These people included the lifeguard, nurse, Dean of the camp, cabin counselors and program leaders. Volunteers included college students from local churches as well as adults. Other histories of the camp describe the buildings and camp grounds operated in different decades. Some buildings wore out and were replaced. They were in various conditions of repair, disrepair, and usefulness to the new programs. Master plans for various decades established areas for cabins, shower houses, and programming spaces. Several times major floods re-defined the creek beds for the South Fork of Little Butte Creek and Dead Indian Creek. Flooding washed out a mirror pond, a baseball field, a swimming pool (more than once) and a parking area. Creek floods damaged bridges beyond repair. However, the grounds have recovered. The location of the camp near the head of the valley is valuable for its environment where plants from many different areas grow. Lady slippers and trilliums meet oak, madrone, and towering cedars.

Volunteers cleared out downed trees, built new cabins, converted a chicken house into a cabin, built a new swimming pool and a shower house. Volunteers constructed Dolph Hall with a full size commercial kitchen, multi-purpose dining hall and fireplace. Uncle Joe’s cabin added indoor programming space for meetings, crafts and rainy day activities. Management improved when it could be year round. Use of camp programming and facilities expanded to include any number of community groups, outdoor school
programs, and training summer fire crews. This campsite has served as a base camp for outdoor adventure camps with backpacking or water components. Thanksgiving dinner became an annual event.

One of the most unique and continuing events has been Shakespeare Camp. Campers stay in family units in cabins. Each day there are family activities. In addition, children’s activities expand their learning and adults participate in educational programs about Shakespeare plays and see plays in Ashland each evening.

In the 1980s as people became more sensitive about cultural diversity, leaders began to agitate to change the name of the camp. Marjorie Knotts was instrumental in taking several years to communicate with representatives of various tribes and tribal groups, including Agnew Baker Pilgrim, a Latgawa leader. Knotts worked with Dr. Jeff LaLande, archaeologist and historian, and storyteller Thomas Doty. She developed a simple dictionary of Takelma language words based on what she learned about tribes and their history in the area. Based on her conversations and research and consent of tribal leaders, she proposed the name “Camp Latgawa” to the United Methodist Oregon-Idaho Conference Board of Camp and Retreat Ministries that leased the camp from the Rogue-Siskiyou section of the U.S. Forest Service. The name change was adopted and came into use in 1983. Since that time, thousands of retreat participants and campers have become familiar with the name. Knotts incorporated the concepts, stories and contacts with Native American culture into the educational programs offered at Camp Latgawa.

Camp Latgawa continues to serve as a valuable retreat center and outdoor education site for southern Oregon.

### Additional resources not included in this proposal

- A brief dictionary of Takelma language words created by Marjorie Knotts
- A VHS video recording of Ross Knotts telling the story of the founding of the Rogue Valley Manor—the concept, the people, raising funds
- A VHS video recording of Ross Knotts explaining the significance of Camp Latgawa to southern Oregon
- Ross and Marjorie Knotts Collection at the Southern Oregon Historical Society.