

Mount Pisgah Arboretum

Remarks About the Tables and List of Trails

By Theodore W. Palmer, June 25, 2006

0. General Remarks: Trails and Roads are listed together. In some cases, it may be hard to determine whether something is a road or a trail, *e. g.* The Plateau Trail. Some definite roads have a trail name, *e. g.* Beistel Trail. Most of the information given in the table is not well defined or is approximate. These tables and list describe 48 roads and trails and 8 trail fragments with a total length of 49,805 feet or 9.43 miles.

Besides imprecision, it is impossible to believe that I have not made real mistakes in such a large collection of information. If you think you see a mistake, or if you know a relevant fact I have not included, please tell me.

1. Names: When I started to make a detailed list of all our trails, I realized that lots of stretches did not have a proper name. For instance we have long called the trail along the Arboretum Entrance Creek, the Entrance Creek Trail. However, in fact there are trails on both the north and the south sides. Thus I list the North Entrance Creek Trail and the South Entrance Creek Trail. Again, the road from the gate just south of the culvert for the Arboretum Entrance Creek next to the Caretaker House to the Tree Round Exhibit has never had a name. At first it developed informally, but finally, Howard Buford, George Jette and I defined and graveled it. For the purpose of this list I have named it the Tree-Round Road. There are many similar examples where I needed to supply a new name for these tables and list. Each new name is denoted by an asterisk in the first table. These names are only provisional.

2. Dates: The date when a trail was built is not always easy to specify. In the case of early roads I do not know the exact date when they were built. Many trails and roads were built in stages. To the best of my ability I try to use the year (and month, if known) in which a visitor would have thought of the trail as completed, even if it was substantially upgraded later. Conversely, many trails have been fairly heavily used when in a primitive state, but the date I chose is intended to reflect a reasonably finished trail. The Fawn Lily Trail has been shown on our maps since 1982 and is regularly used by some visitors, but I regard it as still unfinished because it has never been brought close to the standard of our completed trails.

3. Designer: The designer is the chief designer. In many cases I have made small changes in trails designed before I was in charge. I know some trails which were designed by George Jette and others designed by Howard Buford, but in some cases I am not sure which of these two talented men was responsible. In those cases I have listed them both and I do think they likely collaborated on the design of many of these trails, but I am not sure.

4. Width: The width of almost all roads and trails varies from point to point and the edges are not usually clearly enough defined for precise measurements, so these figures are only approximations. Probably about 1982 I designated trails as either major or minor. The major trails were to be at least five feet wide and the minor ones 42 inches wide. Eventually these widths were upgraded to six feet and four feet, respectively. Two people can walk a four foot wide trail hand-in-hand, but a six foot trail is easier and this can be traversed by a couple with a child or two hand-in-hand. If a leader wants to talk to a group of people on a trail, a six foot width is minimum to accomplish this. Finally the Arboretum gator can traverse a six foot wide trail to carry tools, supplies, an injured or sick person, or an important visitor unable or unwilling to walk.

5. Length: During May, 2006 I measured the length of every road, trail and trail segment as carefully as I could with a rolling measuring device. Lengths are meant to be additive, so they are measured from the mid point of the initial and final trail or point. I rounded to the nearest five feet and hope that all errors are less than five feet or 2%, whichever is larger. Any length over 700 feet (0.13 miles) I have converted to miles (usually in parentheses). I arbitrarily decided that shorter distances did not need to be given in miles.

6. Beginning and Termination: Usually, the beginning of a trail is the end which is closer (by trail) to the Coast Fork Bridge and the termination is the end which is farther away. One exception is that I chose the beginning of the Jette Trail to be the South Plateau Junction (5,510 feet from the Coast Fork Bridge) and the termination to be the point where it joins the Quarry Road, even though this point is only 4,765 feet from the Coast Fork Bridge. This choice gives a description of a connected walk along the Zig-Zag Trail, Plateau Trail and Jette Trail in the correct order.

All distances from the Coast Fork Bridge are measured by the best route available. In particular the entrance to the Arboretum is always by way of the Upper Entrance Road, since we usually keep the (shorter) Lower Entrance Road gated. Hence to approximate the distance from the parking lot, one should subtract about 2,100 feet or 0.4 miles.

7. Elevation: The maximum elevation of a trail is even less exact than other information. At present I have no quick way to measure elevations closer than about 10 feet. The lowest point in the Arboretum (the Northwest Corner, on the bank of the Coast Fork near the Coast Fork Bridge) is about 460 feet, but no area below about 490 feet has been developed. Any place below about 510 feet (upstream) or 480 feet (downstream) is subject to nearly annual flooding. The height of the flood waters decreases down stream by about 30 feet from the south to the north. The Arboretum's East Boundary is a level line at 765 feet. I established this line accurately by several years of surveying (which involved clearing nearly the whole length of poison oak and blackberries). Thus the maximum local relief within the Arboretum is a little over 250 feet of elevation.

Concluding Remarks: With all its imperfections, I hope this information will be useful to those planning, developing and maintaining the Arboretum. Some should be shared with visitors, but this compilation is much too detailed for public use. (My main description of Arboretum trails was 46 pages long when finished in 2006 and will presumably grow (slowly I hope) over time.) As I acquire more precise information, I will try to update these documents as long as I am able. (In my current computer they are under twpalmer -> Arboretum -> Trails. If I should die or be disabled suddenly, the Arboretum should copy everything under "Arboretum".)