An Eye For Nature

Clark Heglar is a man who loves history and photography, and shares both.
The Paisley, Oregon, resident—who now works for the U.S. Forest Service Ranger Station in the Fremont-Winema Forest—has developed historical programs commemorating the Oregon Trail and Craters of the Moon National Monument.

For more than 12 years, he helped bring Idaho history alive through his “oldest man of Idaho” character, which he presented in Hal Holbrook fashion through the Scholar in the Schools project, sponsored by the Albertson Foundation, and the Idaho Humanities Council’s speakers’ bureau.

Clark can thank his great grandmother, great uncle and grandfather for bringing history alive for him. Their stories about traveling along the Oregon Trail from Kansas in a covered wagon, and life as a Pony Express rider and buffalo hunter on the Southern Plains, captured his imagination.

Born on the shores of Lake Pend Oreille at Farragut Naval Base in Idaho during World War II, Clark was drafted into the Army and sent to Vietnam before he could complete the last year of architecture school at Kansas State University.

He came home with a Purple Heart and a Nikon camera.

After earning a degree in commercial photography from the Art Center College of Design in Los Angeles in 1975, Clark moved to Pocatello, Idaho, and opened a commercial photo studio.

He served architectural, advertising and commercial clients for many years, and his landscape and nature images were sold to books and magazines worldwide.

Clark moved to Sun Valley in 1988 and became staff photographer for Oh! Idaho magazine.

Before moving to Paisley with his wife, Gloria, and two cats, Meriwether Lewis and Sacajewea, Clark spent six years as an interpretive specialist at Celebration Park, southwest of Boise.

Each year, he passed on his love of history, teaching 15,000 students from across Idaho the history, archeological and anthropological stories of the park and the surrounding Snake River plain.

“Most landscape and scenic photographers say that when the viewer of their photographs feels that they were there with the photographer, it is a successful photograph. But I find my most successful photographs are the ones that seem like I have gone beyond that—that I had to become part of the landscape to capture the picture. I hope my viewers feel the same way.”

—Clark Heglar

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Top, the Coglan Buttes as seen from the Paisley Ranger Station. Above, wild iris at the Chewaucan Marsh. Left, the Chewaucan River in the Fremont National Forest.

Opposite page: top, a fly fisherman works the last light of the day on the Chewaucan River. Bottom, a rainbow caps the Paisley Ranger District barn.

Photos by Clark Heglar