



BLACK ROCK DESERT
HIGH ROCK CANYON
EMIGRANT TRAILS



NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA

RABBIT HOLE SPRINGS

Improving the Springs

- Over the years, a process of “improving the springs” has occurred; which means that the springs have been altered by humans to allow for more usage and increased water availability.
- Rabbit Hole Spring appears *much different* today than it did 150 years ago.



Consider the photograph of Rabbit Hole Spring today.

Now, read an emigrant description of what the spring looked like in 1846:

“[the spring was a] green mound where all the [rabbit] trails seemed to enter, and on examining the place closely we found a small hole in the top of the mound in which a little puddle of water stood within a few inches of the surface(1),” Lindsay Applegate 1846.

- The Applegate party noticed that the water “seemed to be confined to a tough clay or mud which came near the surface in the center of the mound, thus preventing it from wasting away in the sand (1).”
- The men dug down toward the small vein of water. The digging created a basin large enough to hold several gallons of water; thus the process of “**improving the spring**” began.
- In 1860, as part of the improvement of the “Pacific Wagon Roads,” Rabbit Hole Spring was excavated to form a 35,000 gallon reservoir. A 15 man crew worked for 17 days at Rabbit Hole to complete the project.



“A reservoir now exists which fills up as fast as drained, and can never fail of an abundant supply,” W.H. Wagner, work crew supervisor, noted in his 1860 report.

Information obtained from:

1. Dodd, Charles H. The Emigrant Experience. 19th Century Productions. Chilcoot, CA. 2001.

