Drawer 52

THE OREGON TRAIL

FILE COPY

THE OREGON TRAIL

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interests of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U. S. administration.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Outdoor Recreation

485, D-2

THE OREGON TRAIL

A POTENTIAL ADDITION TO THE NATIONAL TRAILS SYSTEM

Prepared by
the
Department of the Interior
Bureau of Outdoor Recreation,
Under the Authority of
the National Trails System Act.

April 1977

Cover: *Emigrants Crossing the Plains*, an 1869 illustration by Felix Darley. Contributed by the Oregon Historical Society.

FOREWORD

The Oregon Trail was a wagon road stretching 2,000 miles from Missouri to Oregon's Willamette Valley. It was not a road in any modern sense, only parallel ruts leading across endless prairie, sagebrush desert, and mountains to an unknown Promised Land.

A quarter of a million people set out on this faint track, their possessions reduced to what could be carried in a wagon or on the backs of their livestock. Most said goodbye forever to friends, relatives, and familiar places. Many were destined to a shallow grave along the way, and the Oregon Trail often has been called the longest cemetery in the Nation.

To survivors, the 6-month journey was the most important event in their lives. Over 700 of them left diaries and journals. These written accounts, together with remnants and relics of the trail itself, today provide a window to the past.

Many trail remnants have been erased by the bulldozer and the plow. Much of the route today lies under highways and city streets, or traverses farmland where prairie grasses and sagebrush have given way to corn and wheat. Here and there, however, are segments relatively untouched by civilization. Much of the Oregon Trail's potential for public enjoyment lies in these visible remnants, and in the historic sites associated with the trail.

What remains of the Oregon Trail lies gently on the land, as easily erased as a pencil line on paper. If protected, these remnants can provide future generations the opportunity to catch glimpses of our land as it appeared to the emigrants, to relive vicariously their great adventure, and to sense the enormity of its consequence...

Much of the Oregon Trail's potential for public enjoyment lies in its visible remnants, such as these prominent wagon ruts etched deeply into sandstone near Guernsey, Wyoming. A development project assisted by the Land and Water Conservation Fund has made these ruts accessible to the public via a 1/4-mile trail, and has provided interpretive information.

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INTRODUCTION

The National Trails System Act of October 2, 1968 (Public Law 90-543), established the following policy for a national system of trails:

> In order to provide for the ever-increasing outdoor recreation needs of an expanding population and in order to promote public access to, travel within, and enjoyment and appreciation of the open air, outdoor areas of the Nation, trails should be established (i) primarily, near the urban areas of the Nation, and (ii) secondarily, within established scenic areas more remotely located. The purpose of this Act is to provide the means for attaining these objectives by instituting a national system of recreation and scenic trails, by designating the Appalachian Trail and the Pacific Crest Trail as the initial components of that system, and by prescribing the methods by which, and standards according to which, additional components may be added to the system.

The National Trails System Act created three types of trails: national recreation trails, national scenic trails, and connecting or side trails. National recreation trails provide for a variety of outdoor recreation uses in or near urban areas. They may be designated by the Secretary of the Interior or by the Secretary of Agriculture where lands administered by him are involved. National scenic trails are long-distance trails that provide for maximum outdoor recreation potential and for the conservation and enjoyment of nationally significant scenic, historic, natural, or cultural qualities of the area. They may be designated only by the Congress. Connecting or side trails provide access to or connect national recreation or scenic trails and may become part of the trail to which they are joined.

In addition to the two initial components of the National Trails System, 14 other routes were identified in the Act for future study and possible inclusion as national scenic trails. One of the study routes, as identified in Section 5(c)(8) of the Act, is the "Oregon Trail, from Independence, Missouri, approximately two thousand miles to near Fort Vancouver, Washington."

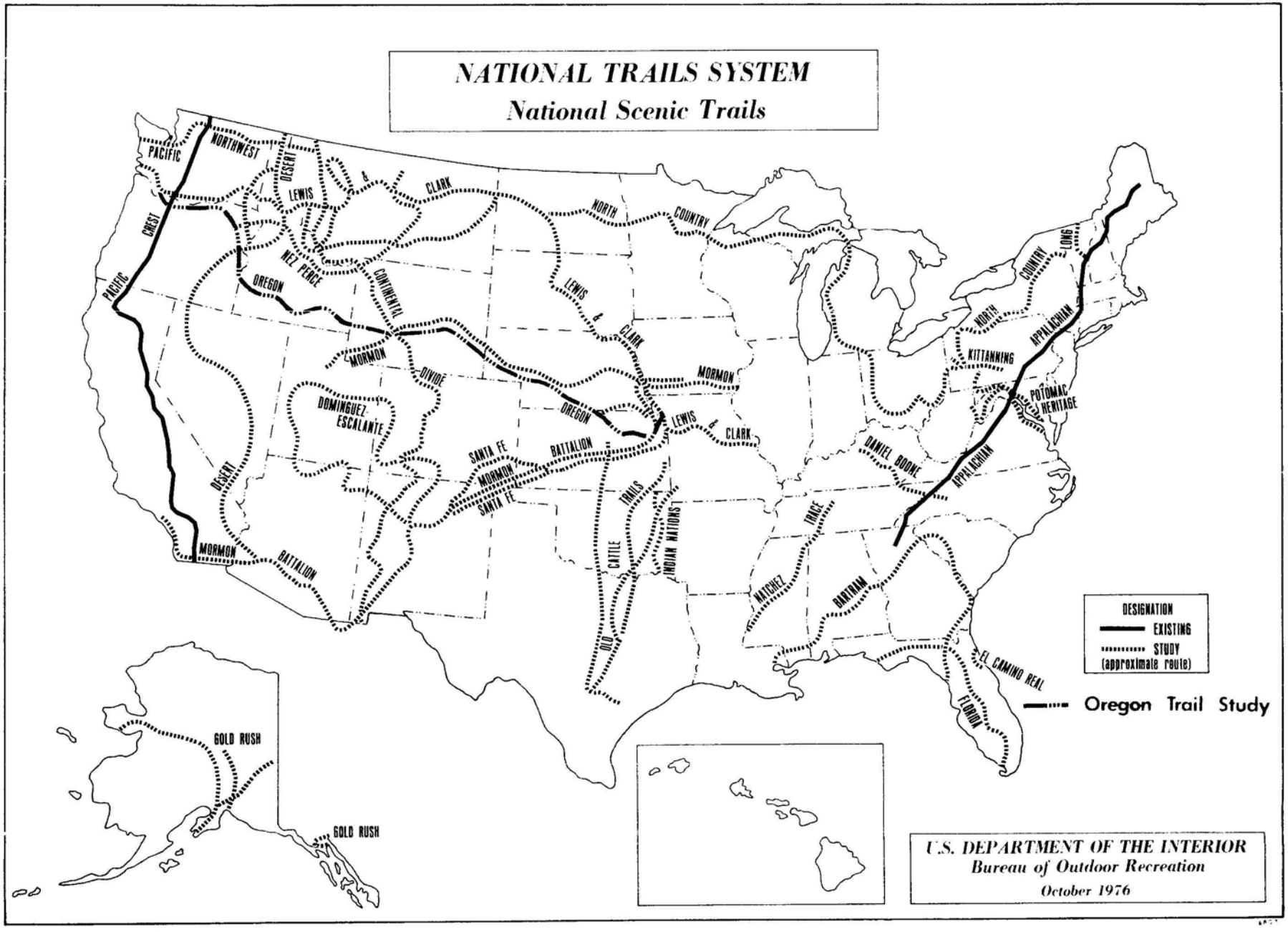
This study seeks to determine the feasibility and desirability of designating the Oregon Trail route as a component of the National Trails System.

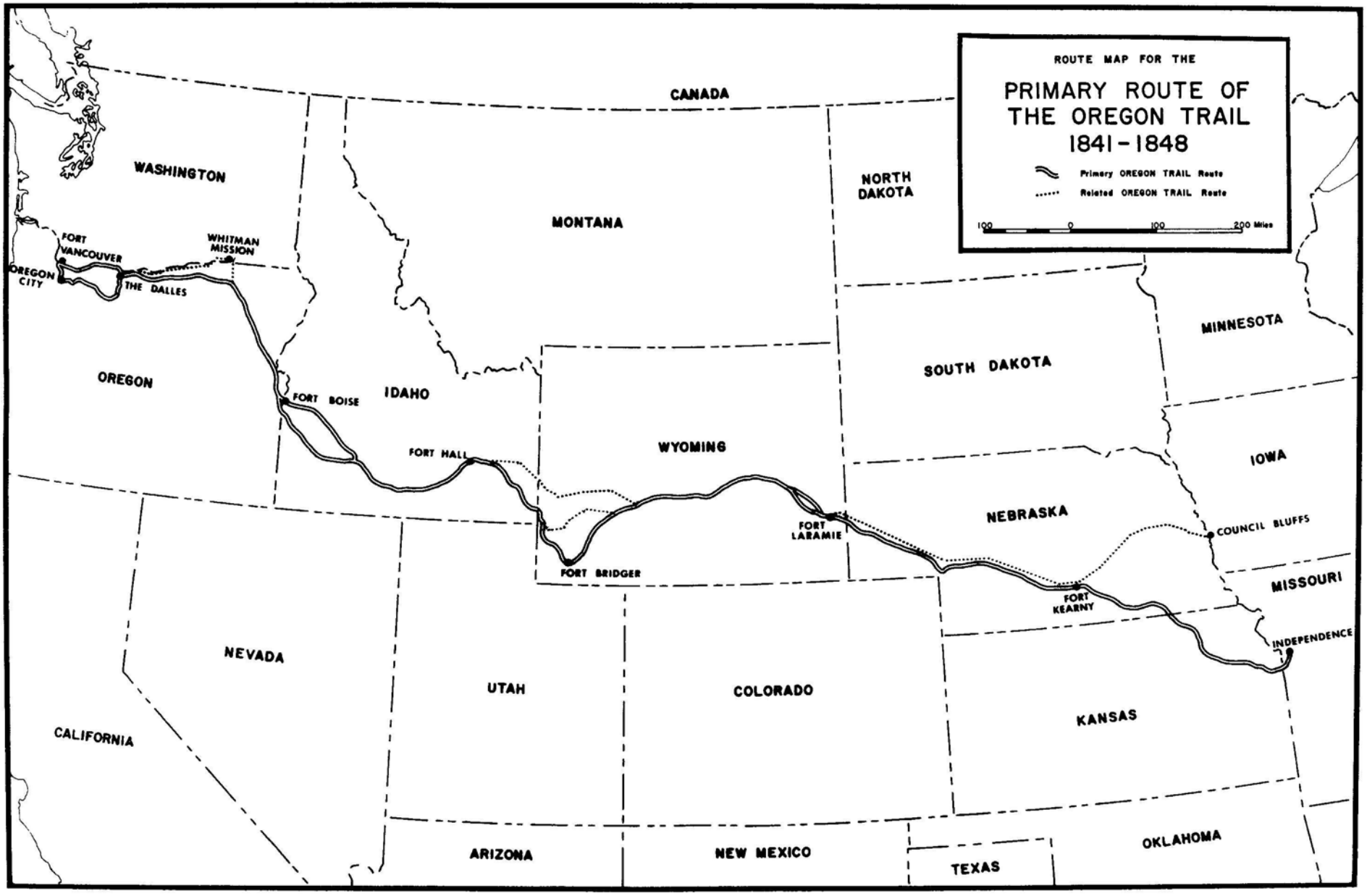
All State and Federal agencies having a direct interest in the Oregon Trail were invited to participate in the study. Because much of the interest in the Oregon Trail is found among the members of local historical societies along the route, representatives from these societies also particpated. A list of participants appears in Appendix A.

The route's location (see maps in section entitled "Description of Primary Route") is its actual historic location, as established by consensus of historians. The route had largely been determined prior to this study, although some questionable segments required further research and documentation by participants in this study.

Segments of the route having high potential for public recreation use were identified. Historic sites along the route were catalogued, and those having high public use potential were identified. High-potential route segments and historic sites were evaluated to determine actions necessary for realization of their potentials. Alternatives for action were presented in an information brochure and at public meetings. Public comment was received orally and in writing.

The work of the Department in assessing the Oregon Trail's potential for recreation use and enjoyment by the American public has been facilitated by the many public agencies and local groups along the Oregon Trail which have already initiated preservation and interpretation programs. It also has been aided by the numerous books and articles that have been written about this historic route.


NATIONAL TRAILS SYSTEM
National Scenic Trails
PACIFIC CREST
NORTHWEST
DESERT
LEWIS & CLARK
NORTH COUNTRY
LONG
APPALACHIAN
NEZ PERCE
OREGON
CONTINENTAL DIVIDE
MORMON
DOMINGUEZ ESCALANTE
SANTA FE
BATTALION
TRAILS
CATTLE
INDIAN NATIONS
OLD
KITTANNING
POTOMAC HERITAGE
DANIEL BOONE
TRACE
NATCHEZ
BARTRAM
EL CAMINO REAL
FLORIDA
GOLD RUSH
DESIGNATION
EXISTING
STUDY
(approximate route)
Oregon Trail Study
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Bureau of Outdoor Recreation
October 1976


ROUTE MAP FOR THE
PRIMARY ROUTE OF THE OREGON TRAIL 1841-1848
Primary OREGON TRAIL Route
Related OREGON TRAIL Route
100 0 100 200 Miles
CANADA
WASHINGTON
MONTANA
NORTH DAKOTA
MINNESOTA
SOUTH DAKOTA
OREGON
IDAHO
WYOMING
IOWA
NEBRASKA
MISSOURI
NEVADA
UTAH
COLORADO
KANSAS
CALIFORNIA
ARIZONA
NEW MEXICO
TEXAS
OKLAHOMA
FORT VANCOUVER
WHITMAN MISSION
OREGON CITY
THE DALLES
FORT BOISE
FORT HALL
FORT BRIDGER
FORT LARAMIE
COUNCIL BLUFFS
FORT KEARNY
INDEPENDENCE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS[1/]

Designation and Establishment

1. Finding: The Oregon Trail has national historic significance as one of the best known and most heavily traveled routes in the Nation's westward migration, and was a major determinant in settlement of the American Northwest. Strong public support exists for its commemoration and preservation. It does not, however, qualify as a national scenic trail since approximately 80 percent of the route has been altered or destroyed by highways, utility rights-of-way, agriculture, and other activities. It also does not follow a continuous and scenic corridor suitable for hiking and horseback riding which are qualifying criteria for National Scenic Trails (Appendix C).

   Recommendation: Federal legislation should be enacted to commemorate the entire route of the Oregon Trail, along its historic alignment, by designation as the Oregon National Historic Trail (see Appendix D).

2. Finding: Up to 20 percent of the trail remains visible, largely across undeveloped rangeland. These remnants together with historic sites along the route afford opportunities for recreation, in the form of understanding and reliving an exciting phase of American history, that cannot be duplicated elsewhere. Along some portions of the route, a scenic landscape and the presence of other recreation resources add to the recreation potential. Public interest in Oregon Trail interpretation and recreation is strong among historical groups along the route, and this interest will spread throughout the general population if the trail's remnants are protected and are made more widely known and accessible.

1/ This section summarizes the study's major findings and recommendations, which are presented in more detail under the section FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS (page 101).

Recommendation: Legislative authority should be provided for establishing suitable cross-country segments as interpretive trails, for assuring adequate marking of highways and roads which closely follow the route of the Oregon Trail, and for other actions recommended herein as appropriate.

Administration and Planning (Public Lands)

3. Finding: There is a need for national coordination of Oregon Trail planning and administration. Concerned State and local agencies and private groups need to have a voice in Oregon Trail planning and administration.

Recommendation: The Secretary of the Interior should be assigned responsibility for overall coordination of matters pertaining to the Oregon National Historic Trail. In carrying out that responsibility, the Secretary should consult with the heads of other Federal and State agencies and private organizations.

4. Finding: Planning and actions for Oregon Trail preservation and public recreational use are currently underway by some public land managers along the route but not by others, and generally are uncoordinated. As a result, Oregon Trail remnants are being preserved in some areas but are being lost in others, and most of the trail's potential for public recreation is not being realized. An estimated 80 percent or more of the original trail has already been altered.

Recommendation: The Secretary, in consultation with others, shall prepare a plan for development and management of the trail within 3 years of enactment of enabling legislation. All eligible Oregon Trail remnants and historic sites should be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.

5. Finding: Because of the diversity in land ownerships and land uses along the route, Oregon Trail management by a single agency would be impractical and costly.

   Recommendation: Management of trail segments and historic sites on public land should be the responsibility of those agencies having jurisdiction over the lands involved.

Acquisition and Development

6. Finding: The greatest funding need is for acquisition, in fee simple or by easement, of high-potential route segments and historic sites in private ownership, particularly where necessary to protect remnants, areas near cities, and for areas which can provide a variety of recreation experiences. The total estimated cost for acquisition is $1.5 million. The Federal share would be approximately $1.0 million, which could be reduced by at least one-third by land exchanges.

   Recommendation: Highest priority for Federal funding should be to acquire high-potential cross-country trail segments and historic sites, especially those endangered by incompatible development, those near urban areas, and those possessing multiple recreation potentials.

7. Findings: Cross-country (nonroaded) segments of the route having potential as interpretive trails remain unavailable for public use, except for a few outstanding examples of wagon ruts that have received interpretive development. Sixty percent of the historic sites are either undeveloped or are below their optimum development level. The total estimated cost for needed development of high-potential route segments and historic sites is $2.0 million. Public use of all Oregon Trail areas would total an estimated 5 million or more visitor days per year if optimally developed.

Placement of markers along public roads following the approximate route of the Oregon Trail would cost an estimated $66,000. The resulting increase in travel along main highways so marked probably would be less than 5 percent, but could reach 100 percent or more where the route follows less traveled secondary roads.

Recommendation: Development priority should be accorded (a) high-potential cross-country trail segments and historic sites near urban areas and those possessing multiple recreation potentials, and (b) marking roads and highways which follow the route. All development should be accomplished in a manner which will preserve historic integrity.

Preservation on Private Lands

8. Finding: Privately owned route segments and historic sites that warrant acquisition--in fee simple or by easement; see #6 above--need to be preserved from changes in land use and vandalism until acquisition can be accomplished. In addition, visible Oregon Trail remnants on private lands that do not warrant acquisition and those where landowners oppose acquisition need to be preserved where possible for their historic value. Local historical societies are well suited to encourage preservation on private lands.

Recommendation: Identification and preservation of Oregon Trail remnants should be encouraged on private and Indian lands.

Motorized Access

9. Finding: Motorized travel, along essentially unaltered cross-country segments of the route, is incompatible with historic preservation.

Recommendation: Motorized vehicles should be prohibited from those designated cross-country trail segments on public lands.

Standard Markers

10. Finding: There is a need for standardized Oregon Trail route markers, to facilitate identification by the public when retracing the route across more than one State. There also is a need for a standard marker for exhibition by destination cities and towns along the route.

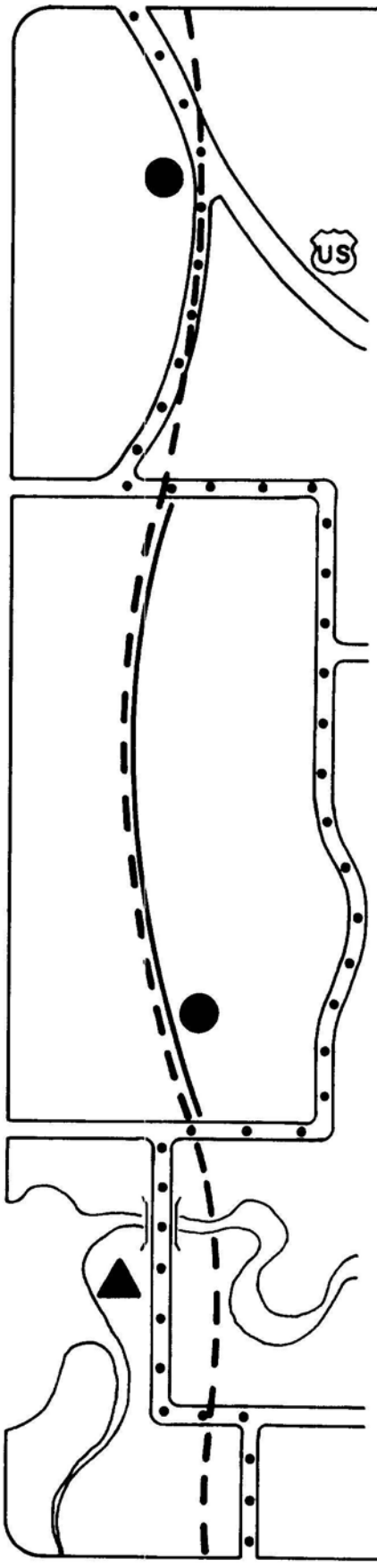
    Recommendation: Standard markers should be developed for cross-country trail segments, for highways and roads following the route, and for destination cities and towns.

Public Information

11. Finding: Existing information on recreational opportunities along the Oregon Trail route is incomplete and fragmented. There is a need for comprehensive, centralized information material to assist those wishing to retrace the route.

    Recommendation: Information material, including a summary brochure and detailed reference document, should be prepared for sale to the public.

The Oregon National Historic Trail Concept



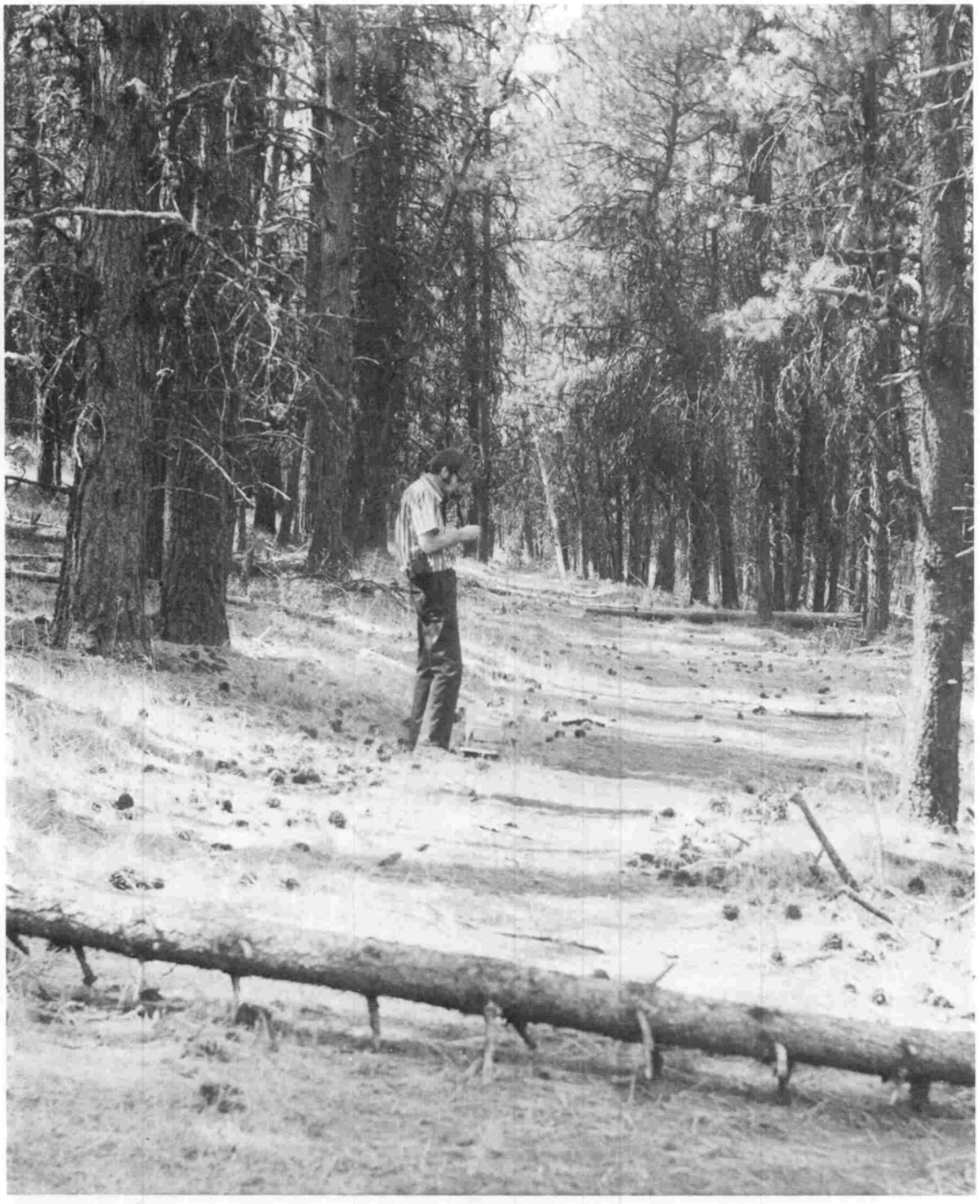
The entire historic route of the Oregon Trail should be commemorated by designation as the Oregon National Historic Trail. The route is still visible as a trail only in certain undeveloped areas. The enabling legislation should direct the identification and preservation of visible trail remnants on Federal lands and should encourage these actions on other lands.

Suitable cross-country segments of the Oregon National Historic Trail should be established as interpretive trails. Most of these segments contain visible Oregon Trail remnants, which should be preserved where necessary by protective development.

Public roads and highways most closely following the actual historic route should be marked to help motorists and bicyclists in traveling the approximate route.

Of 482 historic sites along the Oregon Trail route, 115 have high potential for public use. These sites should be protected and interpretive facilities should be completed where needed, to allow full use and understanding by the public.

Existing parks and recreation areas along the Oregon Trail route provide additional recreation opportunities for those following the route, and many are well located for Oregon Trail interpretive and informational displays.

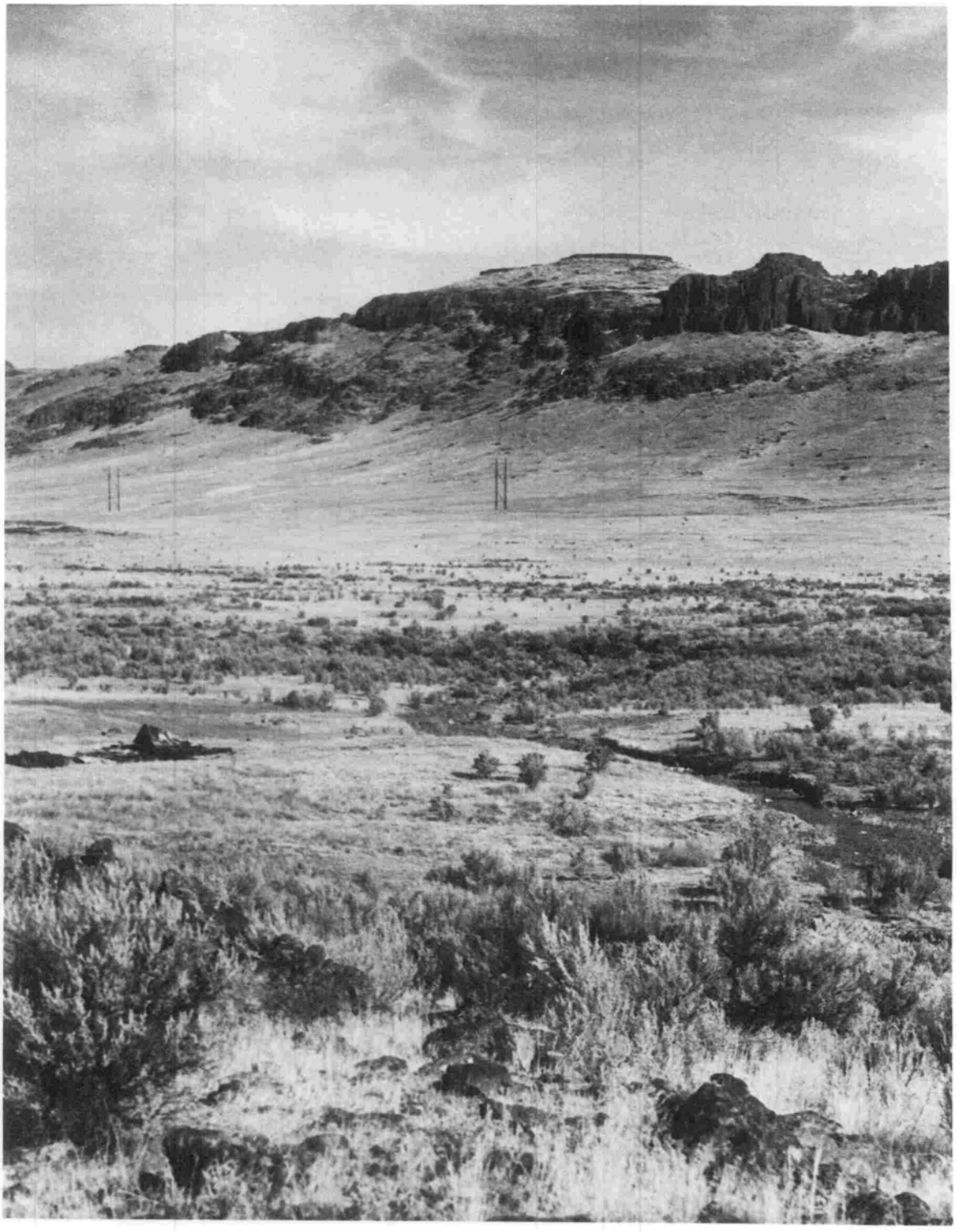


Most visible segments of the route remain unmarked and unknown to the public. (Blue Mountains, Oregon)

In addition to the route itself, historic sites associated with the Oregon Trail comprise a valuable resource for public enjoyment. Some of these, such as here at Fort Kearny Historical Park in Nebraska, have been developed for public use.

Photo: Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

In the absence of a coordinated approach for preservation, Oregon Trail historic remnants and artifacts are being lost through changes in land use. Prominent Oregon Trail ruts may be seen here entering a recently cultivated wheat field near Twin Falls, Idaho.



Many Oregon Trail historic sites remain unprotected, unmarked, and undeveloped for public recreation. An example is this emigrant campground site near Mountain Home, Idaho, where natural hot springs were used for cooking food.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND[1/]

Few emigrant wagon roads compare, even remotely, with the Oregon Trail. In length and use, this overland route far surpassed any other in the Nation. In addition to Oregon bound emigrants, the first two-thirds of the Oregon Trail also was used by travelers who turned off to follow the California Trail. The tracks the emigrants left on the land still can be seen in many places, and the impact of their movement still can be felt in the development of the West. As part of the great national epic of western expansion, the story of the Oregon Trail has gained well-deserved prominence in a diverse national heritage.

Settlement of the Mississippi Valley reached Indian country--the lands west of Missouri and northwest of the frontier line through Iowa--by 1840, and ambitious farmers seeking new lands to occupy had to look a long way. To reach lands suitable for the kind of agriculture they knew, hopeful farmers would have to cross the Great American Desert, as the western plains were then known, and find their way through the Rocky Mountains. There they would leave the United States. But if they could make a summer-long, 2,000-mile trip, they could find good farmland somewhere in Oregon's Willamette Valley. Great Britain and the United States had agreed that neither power would exclude citizens of the other from Oregon, and venturesome farmers saw the chance to settle a rich new land. They had no doubt that if they settled in Oregon, their new farms soon would be part of the United States. Representatives of a militant democracy that had arisen in the Mississippi Valley, they were convinced that national expansion to the Pacific Coast was the manifest destiny of the United States. By settling in Oregon, they would help bring that about.

Exploration of the Oregon Trail had started a generation earlier: Lewis and Clark discovered the Columbia River stretch of the route in 1805 - 1806, and fur hunters found most of the rest in 1811 - 1812 and in 1824. By 1830, fur traders brought wagons over most of the eastern end of the trail, and in 1832, Captain B. L. E. Bonneville extended the wagon road westward through South Pass to the Green River. Accompanying Marcus Whitman in 1836, H. H. Spalding took a wagon as far as Fort Boise, Idaho, although it arrived as a cart. Then in 1840, Robert Newell, Caleb Wilkins, Francis Ermatinger, and Joe Meek took three wagons west from Fort Boise across the Blue Mountains to the Columbia River. They had a difficult time, and Richard Grant, who managed Fort Hall for the Hudson's Bay Company when wagons began to roll in large numbers over the Oregon Trail, regarded the regular trapper's route through the Blue Mountains an impractical wagon road.

[1/] Contributed by Dr. Merle W. Wells, Director, Idaho State Historical Society.

Mountain men who acted as guides for the earliest emigrant parties felt even more pessimistic about the prospect of forcing wagons all the way to the Columbia. But after 1840, a ferment of Oregon excitement in the Mississippi Valley enticed a substantial number of restless farmers to consider moving to Oregon. All they needed was a practical way to get there.

Much of the Oregon fever in the Mississippi Valley came in response to missionary appeals for help. Jason Lee had established a Willamette Valley mission in 1834, and in 1838 he went back to the United States to promote a Methodist colony there. An investigating party came out from Peoria in 1839 - 1840 to check on the possibility of migrating to his mission. Then in 1841, half of John Bidwell's California emigrant party was diverted west of Soda Springs, Idaho, to Oregon. A larger group followed in 1842, although neither of these parties tried to take wagons west of Fort Hall. When more than 800 emigrants appeared on the road in 1843, Marcus Whitman showed them how to take a large number of wagons west from Fort Boise over the Blue Mountains to the Columbia. They had a terrible time doing so, and found the road fully as bad as Richard Grant had told them it would be. But others followed year after year, and the Oregon Trail emerged as a major avenue for emigration.

By 1846, enough settlers had reached the Willamette Valley to give the United States a suitable basis for entering into a long-sought new agreement with Great Britain for settlement of the Oregon question. Great Britain retained Vancouver Island and the northern part of the country; the United States gained the rest of Oregon south of the 49th parallel. This division of Oregon gave the United States desirable ports on Puget Sound, well beyond the territory occupied by emigrants who had come out on the Oregon Trail. But, without the settlements brought about by emigrant traffic over the Oregon Trail, the United States would have had little basis for such a generous agreement; except for a few hundred mountain men in the Snake country, the United States had scarcely occupied Oregon, and the region north and west of the Blue Mountains had been controlled almost exclusively by the Hudson's Bay Company. With the end of the Rocky Mountain fur trade by 1840, except for British operations of the Hudson's Bay Company, even that slight hold had ended. Some of the trappers had settled in the Willamette Valley, and the farmers who joined them had begun to advance the interests of the United States in the Pacific Northwest. After 1846, emigrants on the Oregon Trail no longer left the United States when they crossed the Continental Divide into Oregon, and in 1848, Congress provided Oregon with a much needed territorial government. By that time, some 12,000 emigrants had made the long wagon trip to Oregon, and the trail was well established.

Settlers who came west over the Oregon Trail were by and large substantial citizens. In the first place, they had to have considerable

Over the years, many signs, markers, and monuments have been placed along the Oregon Trail route by public agencies and private citizens. Their purpose generally has been for historic commemoration and interpretation. Some are simple while others are quite elaborate. In total, they illustrate a deep and long-standing interest in the Oregon Trail among the people along its route.

resources to afford the trip. Roughly $800 to $1,200 was required to obtain a proper outfit and get by for a whole year without planting and harvesting a crop. Ordinary subsistence farmers never could accumulate capital on that scale without having a good farm to sell. When workers in Pennsylvania mines were making only 44 cents a day, and wages generally were low, large classes of people were not affluent enough to cross the continent in search of new homes. Those who did go interested others of a similar outlook in coming west to join them, and the Oregon Trail served as a filter that selected the emigrants who eventually found their way to the Willamette Valley. The Pacific Northwest emerged as a somewhat distinctive region on that account.

Unlike a road built by an experienced construction party, the Oregon Trail, like most emigrant routes, developed as a natural road. A little work was done to ease passage through a few difficult places, but emigrants generally lacked incentive to engage in road building when they expected never to return over the route they were following. A good natural road required grades that wagons could ascend, although emigrants were willing to go up and down some steep stretches in order to follow a direct route. An extra 10 or 15 miles might add a day to the trip, so unnecessary wandering was avoided. Water and grass for stock had to be available at least every few miles, and a dry stretch of much more than 20 miles created an ordeal. A few years of heavy grazing along the trail brought changes in vegetation that created major problems for later travelers, who in places had to take their stock several miles off the route to get past the overgrazed zone. Variations in route came more and more often in later years, and after settlements began to develop along the trail, major changes emerged in the transportation pattern. Gradually the Oregon Trail became an overland road, often on an entirely different route, with freight and stage traffic providing most of the wagons. Then railways gradually displaced stage and wagon freighters.

By 1884, rail service was available as a substitute for the overland road through the entire country that the Oregon Trail originally had served. Stage lines and freighters offered only local service, and the long wagon road to Oregon returned to its original function as an emigrant trail for those who could not afford to emigrate by rail. All during the years of the overland road, emigrant wagons had hauled people westward and sometimes eastward to settlements new and old, and emigrant wagons continued to roll over the Oregon Trail in substantial numbers for years even after 1884 when the railroad supplanted other wagon traffic. But times had changed greatly since the early days of the Oregon Trail. The Indian wars were over and the end of the frontier was at hand. By the time Ezra Meeker began to interest people in marking and preserving the Oregon Trail in the early 1900's, automobiles were traveling parts of the old emigrant route, and, in places, ruts of the trail were becoming harder to find. People who

had come over the Oregon Trail still took great pride in their achievement and so did their children and grandchildren.

DESCRIPTION - GENERAL

Travel by emigrant wagons along the Oregon Trail began in 1841 and continued until the early 1900's. Estimates of traffic volume range from 250,000 or less up to 400,000 travelers. There was actually more than one route in places, with the favored route at any given time being dictated by such factors as the location of the best grass and water for livestock. Cutoff and alternate routes were established to speed travel.

To simplify future route marking and public information, a decision was made early in the study to concentrate on one primary route. The period 1841 to 1848, inclusive, was chosen for determining the primary route. This period of the westward migration was historically very significant to Oregon's development. After this period, from 1849 to 1852, most Oregon Trail travel was by people who turned off on the California Trail for the gold fields. By 1853, the Oregon bound traffic had gained in importance again, but by then the traffic pattern was much more complex.

The primary Oregon Trail route is defined as that route which is thought by historians who participated in the study to have received the most use as a wagon road by Willamette Valley bound emigrants during the period 1841 to 1848, inclusive. There are three areas where the primary route divides into two alternate routes of nearly equal use or historic significance. Further investigation may indicate a need for adjustments in route location to conform with historical accuracy. However, it is not expected that such adjustments will be great enough to be apparent on maps at the scale of those in this report.

Where undisturbed, remaining Oregon Trail wagon ruts vary in appearance from shallow, elongated depressions to deep grooves or erosion-deepened gullies. These ruts provide tangible evidence of the emigrant experience, and they are important to Oregon Trail recreational use. They also give the field historian valuable research evidence and serve as an outdoor classroom to students.

The longer, more prominent stretches of visible ruts have been included in the high-potential route segments in each state. Shorter remnants are located along other parts of the route as well. Where accessible to the public, these shorter segments of ruts could provide interpretive interest. Additional ruts likely will be discovered, particularly on private land, if interest in field investigation continues. The presence of visible wagon ruts was noted during field inspection of high-potential route segments, but there was not sufficient time for a complete inventory of ruts during this study.

High-potential historic sites and route segments are those thought to have highest potential for public use and enjoyment, through historic appreciation and/or other recreation activities. They are the sites and segments considered most worthy of acquisition, protection, and development where necessary for public use.

Because the relationship of the Oregon Trail route to roads and highways greatly influences the route's potential for public use, description of high-potential segments of the route here employs the following accessibility categories:

> Freeway segments: These are segments of the Oregon Trail route overlaid or closely paralleled by controlled-access freeways. Realization of potential for recreation is limited by the nature of freeway design constraints. The potential for interpretation and high interest user contact at the safety rest area displays should be utilized to the fullest in aiding travelers to make the best use of their recreation/historic interest time on the road.
>
> Roaded segments: These are segments of the route overlaid or closely paralleled by improved roads or highways other than controlled-access freeways. These provide more options and flexibility for Oregon Trail-related recreation and interpretation than freeway segments.
>
> Cross-Country segments: These are route segments far enough away from improved roads or freeways to be generally out of sight and sound of traffic. They usually have more potential for interpretive/recreation trails than freeway or roaded segments. It is from these segments that the initial trail components will be selected.

Environmental change by man is another factor that influences the route's potential for recreation and historical interpretation. One of the following three ratings was given for each of the high-potential route segments (see Appendix B):

> Low intrusion: Little or no evidence of activities by man altering the area's historical integrity and appearance.
>
> Medium intrusion: Some evidence of nonhistorical environmental change by man.
>
> High intrusion: Area's historical integrity and appearance completely altered or nearly so by man's activities.

In the following sections describing the Oregon Trail and its recreation potential in each State, emphasis is placed on route segments

Cross-country segments of the route are those located far enough away from improved roads or freeways to be generally out of sight and sound of traffic. They usually have more potential for trails than freeway or roaded segments. (Near La Grande, Oregon; Oregon Trail ruts are visible as a diagonal line beyond figures.)

Roaded segments of the route are those overlaid or closely paralleled by improved roads or highways other than controlled access freeways. These generally have greater flexibility for historic interpretation and recreation than freeway segments. (Near Montpelier, Idaho. Man is standing in Oregon Trail ruts.)

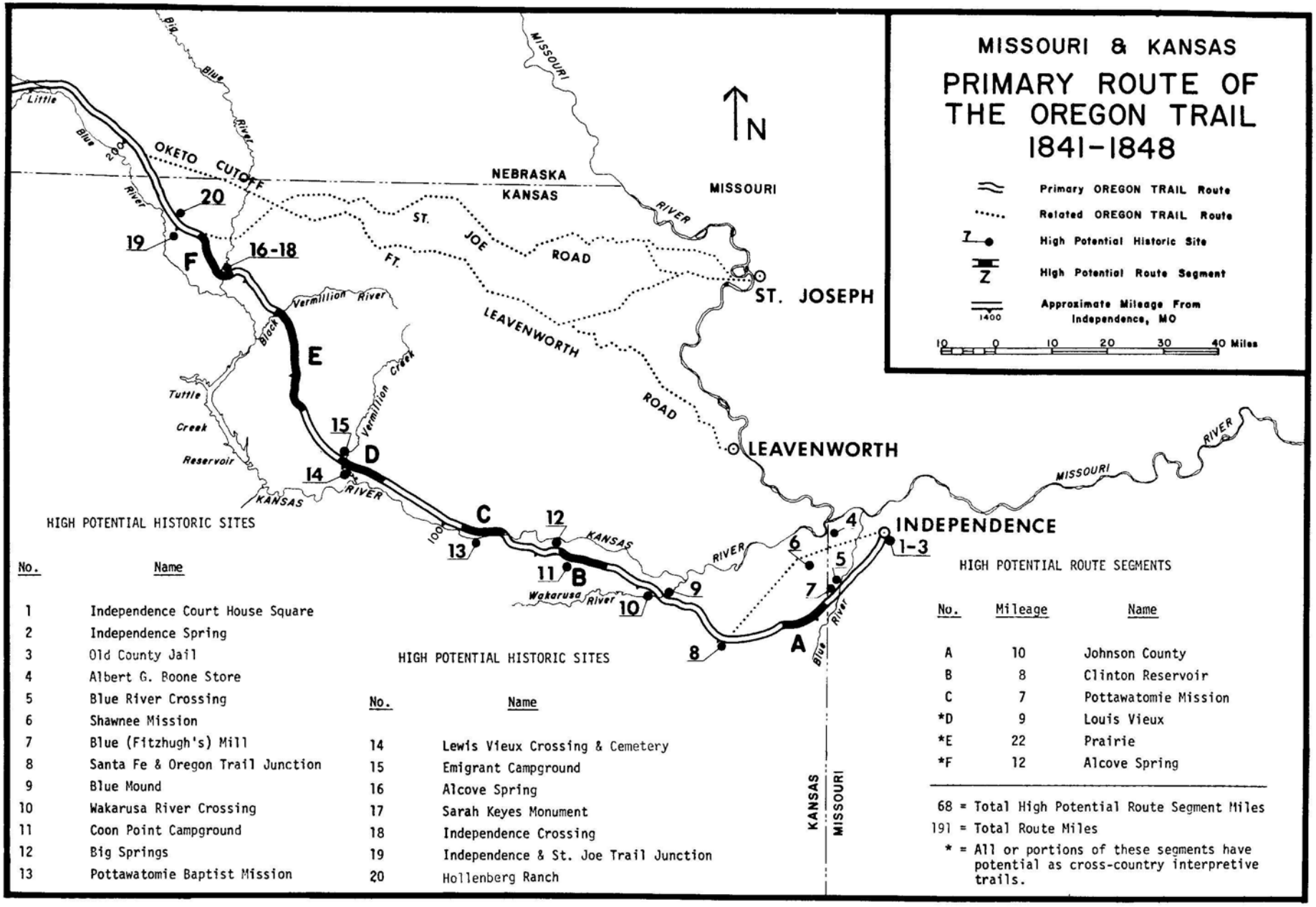
and historic sites having high public use potential. Interpretive development exists at some high-potential sites, but few route segments have received such development. High-potential route segment characteristics are summarized in Appendix B.

Some high-potential route segments or portions thereof warrant establishment as cross-country interpretive trails since opportunities for historic interpretation and/or recreation are greater along these segments than for portions of the route not classified as high-potential.

Historic sites not rated as high-potential often have considerable local interest. If accessible to the public, these sites can provide additional opportunities for interpretation.

D E S C R I P T I O N

Missouri and Kansas



HIGH POTENTIAL HISTORIC SITES

No.	Name
1	Independence Court House Square
2	Independence Spring
3	Old County Jail
4	Albert G. Boone Store
5	Blue River Crossing
6	Shawnee Mission
7	Blue (Fitzhugh's) Mill
8	Santa Fe & Oregon Trail Junction
9	Blue Mound
10	Wakarusa River Crossing
11	Coon Point Campground
12	Big Springs
13	Pottawatomie Baptist Mission

HIGH POTENTIAL HISTORIC SITES

No.	Name
14	Lewis Vieux Crossing & Cemetery
15	Emigrant Campground
16	Alcove Spring
17	Sarah Keyes Monument
18	Independence Crossing
19	Independence & St. Joe Trail Junction
20	Hollenberg Ranch

HIGH POTENTIAL ROUTE SEGMENTS

No.	Mileage	Name
A	10	Johnson County
B	8	Clinton Reservoir
C	7	Pottawatomie Mission
*D	9	Louis Vieux
*E	22	Prairie
*F	12	Alcove Spring

68 = Total High Potential Route Segment Miles

191 = Total Route Miles

* = All or portions of these segments have potential as cross-country interpretive trails.

DESCRIPTION - MISSOURI AND KANSAS

Oregon bound wagon trains began their westward trek from various locations, giving the Oregon Trail several origins over the years. During the 1840's, most trains started in the vicinity of Independence, Missouri, and this is considered to be the symbolic beginning of the trail.

Although much of the Oregon Trail through Missouri and Kansas has been erased by urban development, agriculture, and road construction, the presence of historic sites and scenic areas along the route provide significant opportunities for public recreational use. The opportunity for reliving the emigrant experience is perhaps greatest along two high-potential Kansas route segments that remain in a primarily natural condition. Existing and proposed parks and reservoirs close to the Oregon Trail route provide an opportunity to coordinate development of the trail with other recreation facilities at these areas.

The Route Through Missouri and Kansas

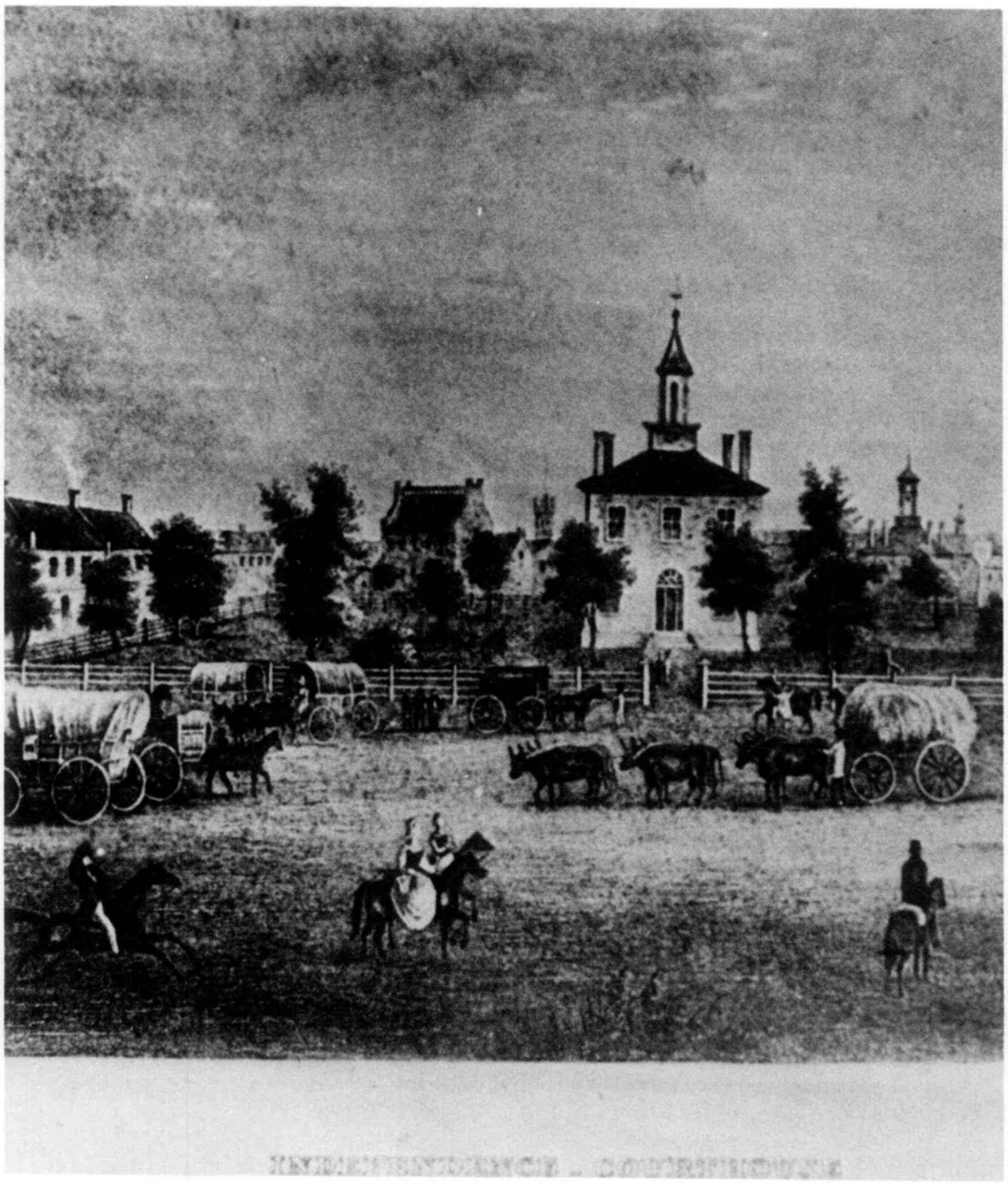
The Oregon Trail route through Missouri and Kansas measures 191 miles, of which 17 miles are in Missouri and 174 miles are in Kansas. None of Missouri's portion of the route has been classed as having high potential for public use.

Six high-potential route segments were identified in Kansas, totaling 68 miles. One is classified as roaded, one is cross-country, and the remaining four contain both access categories. Three of the segments have potential for establishing interpretive cross-country trails.

Only minimal development, primarily route marking and interpretation, would be needed to allow public use of those route segments having trail potential. Access could be provided from existing highway rest areas, and little or no new trail construction would be needed unless further investigation shows a need to protect visible Oregon Trail remnants from public travel by constructing trails adjacent to the remnants.

The high-potential roaded segments could be marked for the motorist and bicyclist. This would require additional route marking and interpretive development, concentrated primarily at historic sites and recreation areas along the segments.

Thirty-two historic sites were identified along the Oregon Trail route in Missouri and Kansas. Twenty of these sites, five in Missouri and 15 in Kansas, have high potential for public use. Eight of the high-potential sites are located along high-potential route segments and



Emigrants setting out on the Oregon Trail during the 1840's converged at Independence, Missouri, the last town they would see for 6 months. The wagon trains formed along Liberty Street, the west boundary of Courthouse Square. The courthouse, pictured here as it appeared during that period, is preserved in part within the present Jackson County Courthouse. A staffed interpretive facility in the vicinity would be appropriate, to provide information for those retracing the Oregon Trail today and to coordinate interpretation of nearby historic sites. Photo: Harry S. Truman Library.

the remaining 12 are on other parts of the route. Fourteen of the high-potential sites are either undeveloped or are only partially developed.

A staffed interpretive facility in the Independence area could provide information for those retracing the route and coordinate interpretation of related historic sites. In Kansas, a staffed interpretive center could be developed at the site of the Pottawatomie Baptist Mission, a favorite resting place for westward bound emigrants. The site is presently under consideration as the location of a new State Historical Museum. The State has purchased the site and plans to restore the mission using grant funds authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

The historic and recreation potential of the Oregon Trail route in Missouri and Kansas is complemented by other State and local recreation programs. Present and planned park areas near the trail route in Missouri provide hiking and bicycling opportunities. Jackson County, which includes part of Kansas City, is developing the Blue River and Little Blue River Parkways. The Blue River Parkway, which will provide 150 miles of trails, is among the Nation's largest urban parks. The Parkway links a series of parks and historic sites close to the Oregon Trail.

High-Potential Route Segments - Kansas

Johnson County Segment (10 miles). Urban, agricultural, and other developments have erased Oregon Trail remnants along this segment, which is located adjacent to metropolitan Kansas City. The segment's rating of high potential stems mainly from its opportunities for recreation. Scenic areas associated with three proposed Corps of Engineers reservoirs are located near the Oregon Trail route at Indian Creek, Tomahawk Creek, and Wolf-Coffee Creek. If constructed, these projects would provide opportunities for acquiring scenic natural lands that could be used for Oregon Trail interpretation, recreation areas, and hiking trails.

Clinton Reservoir Segment (8 miles). This roaded segment, which does not contain any visible Oregon Trail remnants, follows U. S. Highway 40 and includes two high-potential historic sites. It traverses a scenic area proposed for a State park within the Corps of Engineers Clinton Reservoir Project, now under construction. If established, the park would provide opportunities for Oregon Trail interpretation in addition to other forms of outdoor recreation.

Opportunities for historic interpretation exist also at Perry Lake, an existing Corps of Engineers and State recreation area which provided camping, picnicking, and water recreation for over 1,700,000 visitors in 1973. The lake provides recreation for residents of Kansas City, Lawrence, and Topeka.

Pottawatomie Mission Segment (7 miles). Beyond Topeka, the route closely follows U. S. Highway 24 along the Kansas River. Although the Oregon Trail is no longer visible, the segment is visually appealing. Historic interpretation could be tied in with that at the Pottawatomie Baptist Mission site a few miles away.

Louis Vieux Crossing and Cemetery Segment (9 miles). This cross-country segment has potential as an interpretive trail, with development concentrated at two high-potential historic sites. The segment is named for one of these sites, an early toll bridge on the Vermillion River. Two Corps of Engineers reservoir projects, Onaga and Grove Reservoirs, are proposed in this area. If constructed, the projects would provide opportunities for acquiring scenic lands which could be used for historic preservation and interpretation and for hiking. The Corps is coordinating historic aspects of the proposed projects with the Kansas State Historical Society.

Prairie Segment (22 miles). The route here crosses visually appealing native grassland once considered for Prairie National Park. It provides the best opportunity along the route in Kansas for wading through a sea of grass next to intermittent wagon ruts.

Approximately half of the segment leads cross-country, with high potential as an interpretive, recreational, and nature study trail. The remainder is roaded, with potential for marking and interpretive development. Information could be provided at nearby Tuttle Creek State Park, which also supports camping and water-oriented recreation.

Alcove Spring and Independence Crossing Segment (12 miles). This portion of the route crosses a natural area of woods and streams outstanding for its scenic beauty and its potential for recreation and historic interpretation. Among three high-potential historic sites along the segment is Alcove Spring, located below a small waterfall cascading over a rocky ledge that was much admired in emigrant diaries.

A portion of the segment has potential as a cross-country interpretive trail, while the remainder is accessible by a winding dirt road. Oregon Trail ruts are still visible in at least one location. The entire segment, and the three historic sites in particular, have high potential for protection and interpretive development, and would require provision for public access. Two historic river sites along the route here are in the flood plain of Tuttle Creek Lake.

Public Agencies - Missouri and Kansas

Seventy-four percent of the route in Missouri and Kansas is privately owned. The majority of the publicly owned portion is within the rights-of-way of public roads and highways.

These monuments on the banks of Little Vermillion Creek in northeastern Kansas mark the remains of Louis Vieux and members of his family. Vieux, a Pottawatomie Chief, built a toll bridge nearby in the late 1840's and operated it primarily to serve Oregon Trail traffic. The cemetery, together with the bridge site, provide opportunities for Oregon Trail interpretation. Photo: Kansas State Historical Society.

Only the first 17 miles of the route are in Missouri, in the outskirts of the Kansas City urban area. This part of the route is either privately owned or follows public roads, such as the River Road along the Big Blue and Little Blue Rivers.

The principal State department involved with outdoor recreation and historic sites in Missouri is the State Park Board, whose Director is also the State Historic Preservation Officer. The Missouri State Park System is comprised of two basic types of units: parks, and historical and archeological sites. The system now has 35 State parks and 22 historical and archeological sites with a total area of over 75,300 acres. There is an opportunity for recreation trails in the public parks near the Oregon Trail route, in Big Blue Park, Santa Fe Trail Park, and south along the Blue River Parkway and Little Blue Trace.

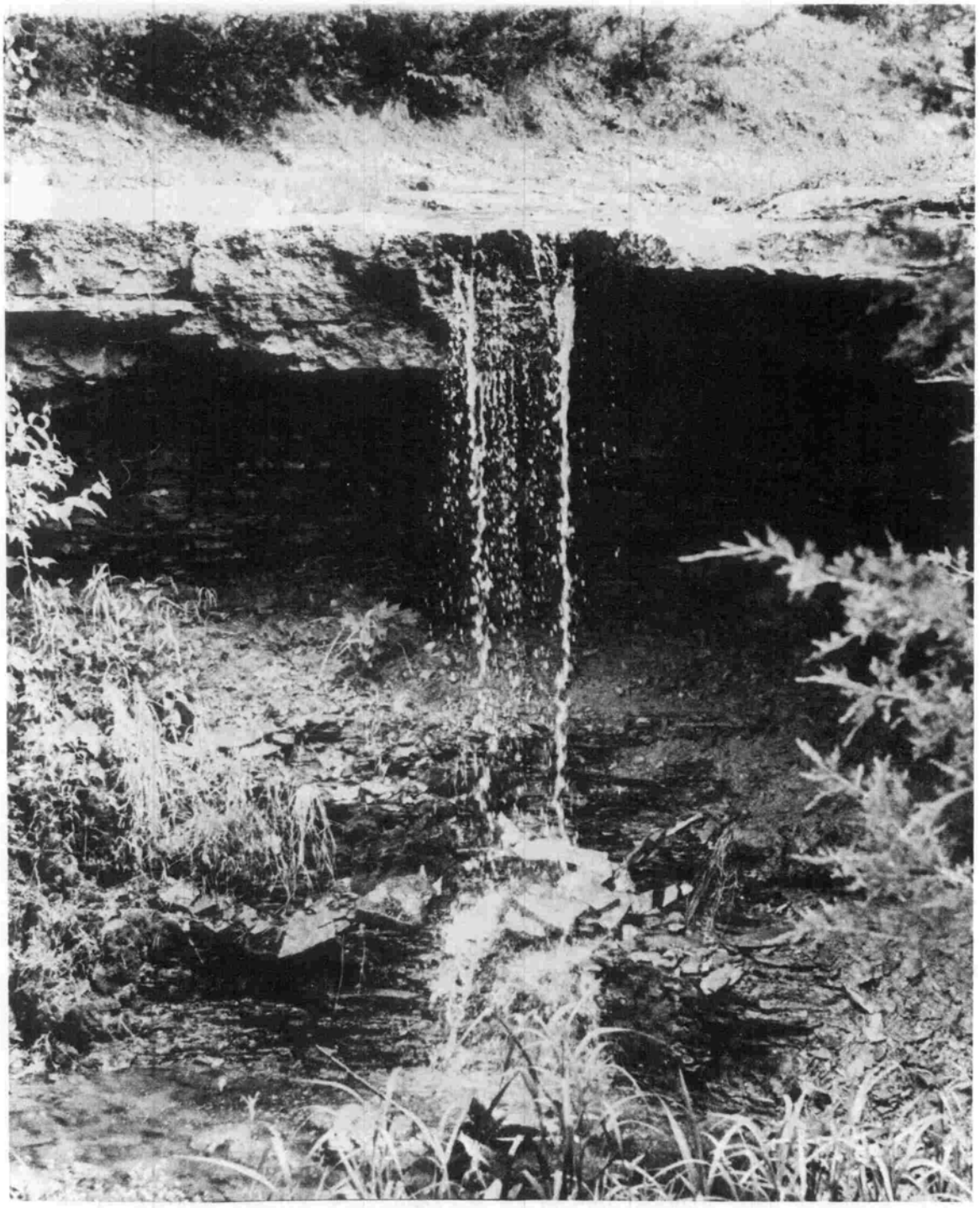
The Missouri State Park Board, Jackson County Historical Society, Jackson County Park and Recreation Department, Kansas City Parks and Recreation Department, Independence Park and Recreation Department, Westport Historical Society, and many other local historical societies and park departments in the State are carrying on active programs for historic preservation or recreation projects related to the Santa Fe and the Oregon Trails.

The State Interagency Council for Outdoor Recreation has the responsibility for outdoor recreation planning and the administration of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Program. The Missouri State Highway Department provides access roads to public recreation areas, roadside park and rest areas, historical site markers, and roadside table sites.

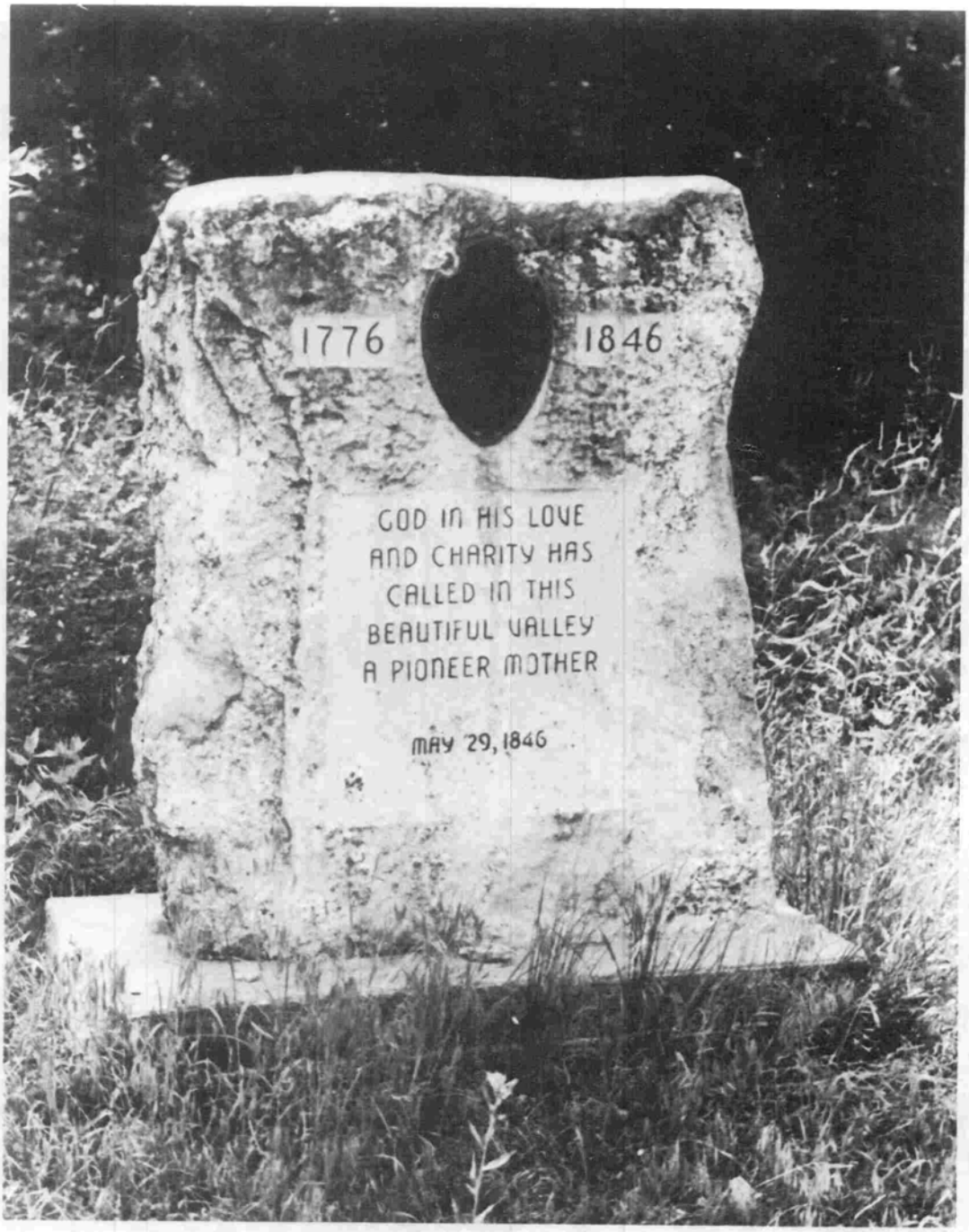
In Kansas, 45 of the 174 route miles are on public land, and the remaining 129 miles are privately owned.

The Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation's reservoir projects provide opportunities to preserve and interpret those Oregon Trail historic sites in Kansas that are adjacent to the reservoirs. The Corps is planning recreation, historic preservation, and interpretation programs which could provide an additional 21 miles of publicly owned, high-potential route mileage in Kansas.

The Kansas State Historical Society has broad responsibilities for research, preservation, and interpretation, plus a cooperative program including all county and local historical societies in the State. Fifteen historic sites are administered by the Society, three of which are close to the Oregon Trail route. The Society's Executive Director serves also as the State Historic Preservation Officer.



Approximately 2 weeks after leaving Independence, the emigrants came upon a crystal-clear spring, bubbling from a natural rock amphitheater just below this diminutive waterfall on Alcove Springs Creek. Many parties stopped to rest here, and a member of the ill-fated Donner wagon train of 1846 carved the name "Alcove Spring" in the rock ledge. The site provides fine opportunities for protection and public access, and for interpreting Oregon Trail events. Photo: Kansas State Historical Society.



This monument near Alcove Spring in northeastern Kansas commemorates Sarah Keyes, a member of the Donner party who died here in 1846. Her early death probably saved her from the more terrible agonies that overtook others in the party months later, when they met starvation in the snows of the California Sierras. This grim but fascinating episode in Oregon and California Trail history could be incorporated into interpretation at Alcove Spring. Photo: Kansas State Historical Society.

The Kansas State Parks Resources Authority emphasizes trails and historic sites in its park and recreation program. The Kansas State Outdoor Recreation Plan shows a need for developing the recreation potential of historic trails and historic sites, with emphasis on the concept of "historic recreation." Programs for acquisition, preservation, and development of important historic sites have been limited due to inadequate funding and statutory authority.

The Kansas State Highway Commission has developed a system of safety rest areas with recreation facilities and historic interpretation markers at historic sites along the Oregon Trail route. These historic markers have been a joint project of the State Historical Society and the Highway Commission. The State has recognized the value of scenic-historic highways which include motor routes along the Oregon Trail route.

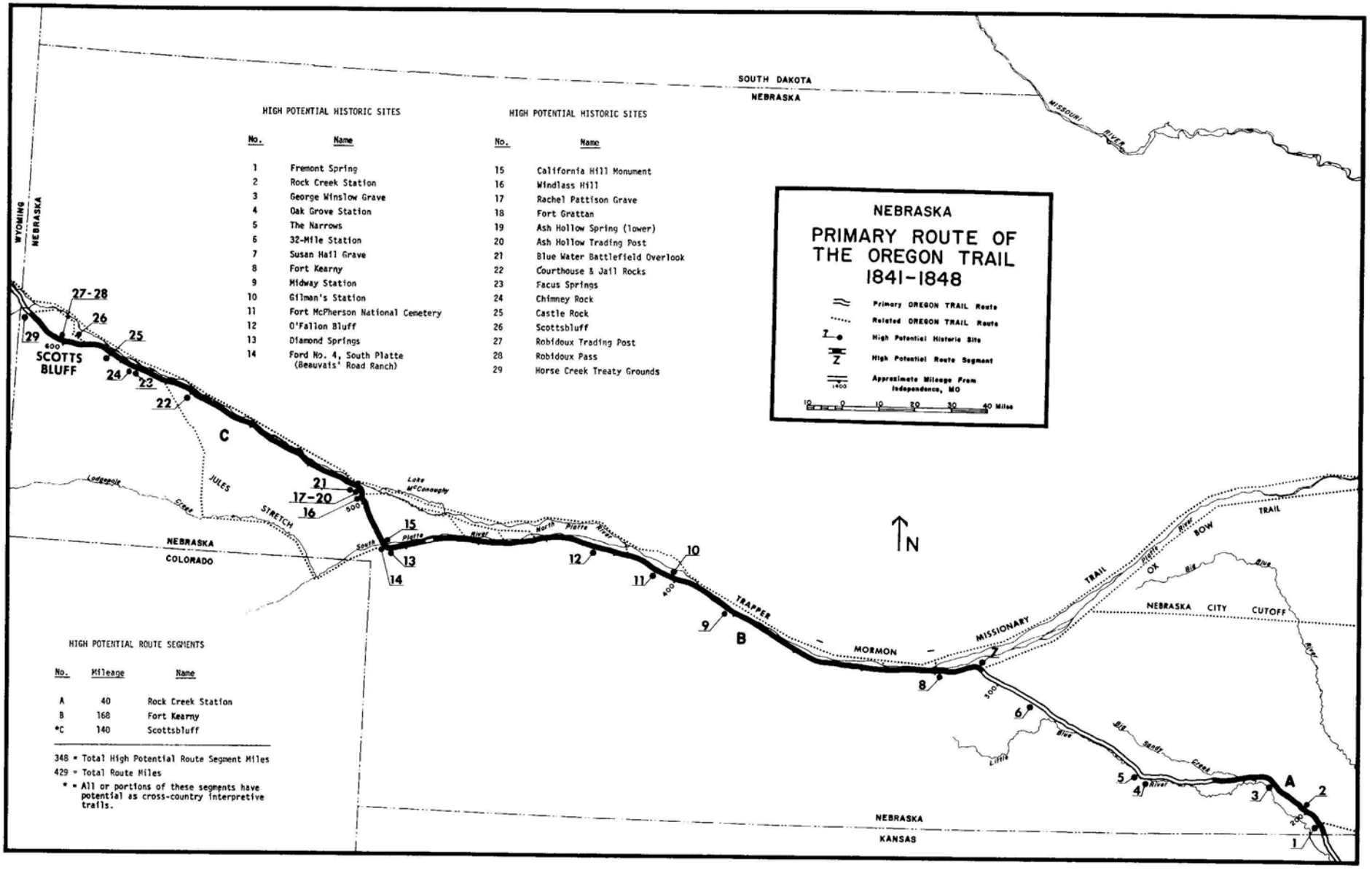
Land Use and Its Effect - Missouri and Kansas

The primary Oregon Trail route from Independence, Missouri, to the Kansas border largely is within the Kansas City metropolitan area and vestiges of the trail are no longer visible except on the west bank of the Big Blue River.

In Kansas, urban development has erased about 15 miles of the route in Lawrence and Topeka. Approximately 80 of the 174 route miles in Kansas follow State highways. Much of the remainder crosses Kansas farmland. The route is still visible only in a few places which have escaped the plow and the bulldozer; among these are the Westmoreland area and Alcove Spring. North of Westmoreland, the route traverses 22 miles of original prairie. The six route segments in Kansas classed as having high potential for public use cross rolling hills, river bottoms, and wooded areas where the mark of civilization is less pronounced.

D E S C R I P T I O N

Nebraska



HIGH POTENTIAL HISTORIC SITES

No.	Name
1	Fremont Spring
2	Rock Creek Station
3	George Winslow Grave
4	Oak Grove Station
5	The Narrows
6	32-Mile Station
7	Susan Hail Grave
8	Fort Kearny
9	Midway Station
10	Gilman's Station
11	Fort McPherson National Cemetery
12	O'Fallon Bluff
13	Diamond Springs
14	Ford No. 4, South Platte (Beauvais' Road Ranch)

HIGH POTENTIAL HISTORIC SITES

No.	Name
15	California Hill Monument
16	Windlass Hill
17	Rachel Pattison Grave
18	Fort Grattan
19	Ash Hollow Spring (lower)
20	Ash Hollow Trading Post
21	Blue Water Battlefield Overlook
22	Courthouse & Jail Rocks
23	Facus Springs
24	Chimney Rock
25	Castle Rock
26	Scottsbluff
27	Robidoux Trading Post
28	Robidoux Pass
29	Horse Creek Treaty Grounds

NEBRASKA

PRIMARY ROUTE OF THE OREGON TRAIL 1841-1848

Primary OREGON TRAIL Route

Related OREGON TRAIL Route

High Potential Historic Site

High Potential Route Segment

Approximate Mileage From Independence, MO

10 0 10 20 30 40 Miles

HIGH POTENTIAL ROUTE SEGMENTS

No.	Mileage	Name
A	40	Rock Creek Station
B	168	Fort Kearny
*C	140	Scottsbluff

348 = Total High Potential Route Segment Miles

429 = Total Route Miles

* = All or portions of these segments have potential as cross-country interpretive trails.

DESCRIPTION - NEBRASKA

In the 2 or 3 weeks it took most emigrants to reach the present State of Nebraska, the novelty of the experience had faded and the toughening process had begun. Nebraska's 429 miles of Oregon Trail would continue hardening the strong and would cull some of the weak and unfortunate through sickness, accidents, and, sometimes, Indian attack.

Today, much of the land along Nebraska's part of the Oregon Trail route has been tamed by the plow. Roads and highways speed the modern traveler along the former wagon road. Visible remnants of the trail are few in number, but in places are quite spectacular. Some remnants could be lost through further land development.

The route's potential for public recreation use in Nebraska lies largely in following the route by highway, with interpretive trails and facilities, picnic areas, and circle tours concentrated at high-potential historic sites. There also is considerable potential for recreation trails that would connect with the Oregon Trail route.

The Route Through Nebraska

Three route segments totaling 348 miles, or 81 percent of Nebraska's 429-mile long portion of the Oregon Trail, have high potential for public use. This proportion is considerably higher than in other Oregon Trail states, due partly to historic interpretation potentials, but also to water-related recreation opportunities along the route. All three segments, for the most part, follow public roads and highways, although portions of each are cross-country.

The Platte River system dominates the Oregon Trail landscape for more than 300 miles in Nebraska. The broad, shallow river bordered by flat terrain and low sand hills caused this part of the route to be known to the emigrants as the "Coast of Nebraska." Together with adjacent lands, the long river corridor possesses many of the State's opportunities for outdoor recreation.

The State of Nebraska has concentrated much of its recreation investment in this corridor, as indicated by the 13,000 acres of parks, lakes, wildlife areas, reservoirs, and wayside rest areas managed by the State Game and Parks Commission along the river. The presence of the Oregon Trail route within the corridor provides an opportunity for coordinating historic interpretation with other recreation trails, water-related recreation areas, and the heavily traveled east-west Interstate 80.

The freeway and roaded portions of the high-potential segments offer better opportunities for historic interpretation and recreation than

Nebraska has taken considerable pride in her Oregon Trail historic sites, and many have received protection and interpretive development. Fort Kearny State Historical Park, appearing here as an oasis in the surrounding farmland, features an interpretive center and a museum. Photo: Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.

do those along segments not classified as high-potential. Visible Oregon Trail ruts are found in several locations, providing opportunities for short interpretive trails near public roads.

The cross-country portion of the route, particularly in eastern Nebraska, largely traverses farmland with little potential for long interpretive trails away from roads. Opportunities for such trails may exist in the less developed rangeland along the Scotts Bluff Segment. Potentials for establishing cross-country interpretive trails in the State were not fully explored and further studies should be conducted.

Twenty-eight of the 96 historic sites identified along the Oregon Trail route in Nebraska have high potential for public use. Of the high-potential sites, 24 are located along the high-potential route segments. Nebraska has taken considerable pride in her Oregon Trail sites over the years and many have received protection and interpretive development. Outstanding among these is Fort Kearny State Historical Park, featuring an interpretive center, a museum, and magnificent cottonwoods that were planted when the fort was founded. Sixteen of the 28 high-potential sites in Nebraska, however, are either undeveloped or only partially developed.

Several historic sites are natural landmarks that rise in magnificent contrast above the level plain. These rocky spires and eroded bluffs helped break the monotony of endless prairie travel, and received considerable comment in emigrant diaries. Notable among them are Courthouse, Jail, Chimney, and Castle Rocks, and Scotts Bluff. The latter is a major feature of Scotts Bluff National Monument, where the National Park Service administers a major interpretive facility. Another natural landmark, Robidoux Pass, has high potential for both historic interpretation and recreation.

High-Potential Route Segments - Nebraska

Rock Creek Segment (40 miles). The segment is half roaded and half cross-country, and largely traverses farmland along the Little Blue River. Its primary potential is for motor and bicycle tours along county roads, with interpretive development concentrated at high-potential historic sites. Most of the segment is in Jefferson County, where the local historical society has carried out an outstanding program of Oregon Trail route marking at all road intersections.

Rock Creek Station, located within 353-acre Rock Creek State Historical Park, is virtually undeveloped. Interpretation of the stage and Pony Express station that stands here would enhance the area's recreational value. Prominent Oregon Trail ruts here provide opportunity for an interpretive foot trail. The park is scenic, and warrants development as planned for picnicking, camping, and other recreational activities. Oregon Trail remnants also are visible near the George Winslow Grave.

The State of Nebraska manages 13,000 acres of public recreation areas along the Platte River. The Oregon Trail route follows the Platte for more than 300 miles within the State, and there is high potential for relating recreational use and historic interpretation along the route with other nearby recreation areas. Photo: Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.

In addition to Oregon Trail-related recreation, a scenic hiking and bicycle trail could be developed along the Little Blue River. The trail would be within 5 miles of the Oregon Trail route and would roughly parallel it.

Fort Kearny Segment (168 miles). The entire segment follows the south banks of the Platte River and its tributary, the South Platte. The landscape here, formerly midgrass prairie, is now predominantly farmland. Trees and brush are common along the Platte's many shallow, braided channels.

The historic Mormon Trail, also known as the Council Bluffs Road in this area, follows the north bank of the Platte.

Most of this segment follows Interstate 80 and other roads and highways; its primary potential for public recreation use is through interpretive signing. Sixty-eight miles of the segment have been classed as cross-country, but the route here mostly crosses privately owned farmland with little potential for interpretive trails.

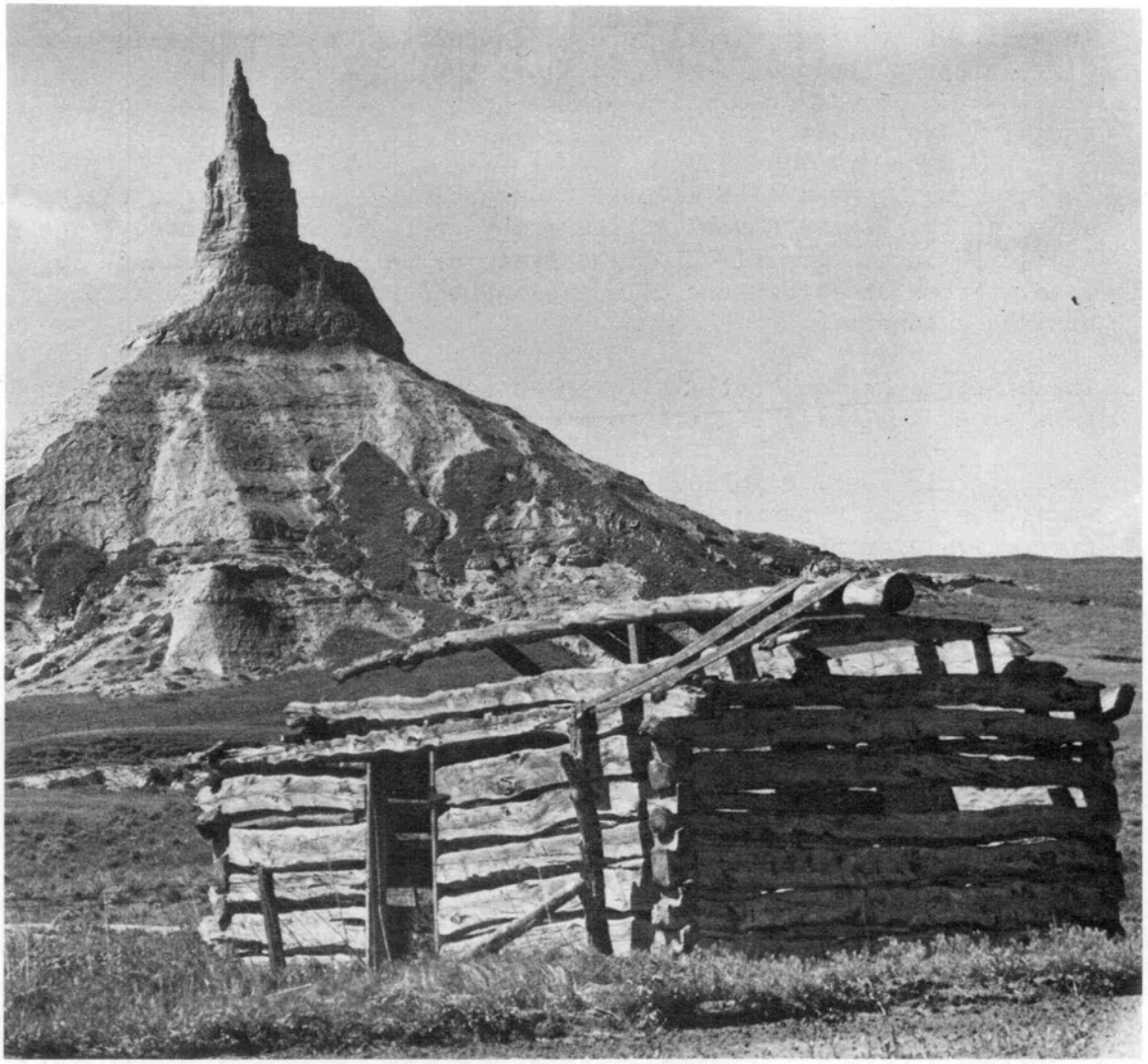
Opportunities for Oregon Trail interpretation are found at highway rest areas, at nearby recreation and wildlife areas, and at many of the 30 historic sites along the segment. Five of the historic sites have high potential for recreation, and all but one are developed for public use. Midway Station, a log structure built as a stage and Pony Express station, warrants acquisition for interpretive development. The building, still standing, is on private land. Oregon Trail ruts at this site also have interpretive potential.

A major historic site is Fort Childs, a military post built in 1848 to guard the eastern end of the Oregon Trail and later called Fort Kearny. The site is within Fort Kearny State Historical Park and has been extensively developed by the State.

A chain of State-administered lakes and recreation areas paralleling this segment along the Platte River provides opportunities for nature study, waterfowl and deer hunting, fishing, boating, canoeing, hiking, and other activities. Hiking and bicycle trails could be developed for 160 miles along irrigation canals that generally parallel the Oregon Trail route. Trails along the canals would cross the Oregon Trail route in a few locations, providing opportunities for historic interpretation.

Irrigation farming has obliterated most of the Oregon Trail along this segment and with agricultural development continuing, the few remaining Oregon Trail remnants are increasingly in danger of loss.

Scotts Bluff Segment (140 miles). This segment, rich in historic sites and scenic landmarks, follows the south bank of the North Platte



Several historically significant natural landmarks rise in magnificent contrast to Nebraska's level plains. These rocky spires and eroded bluffs helped break the monotony of endless prairie travel, and inspired considerable comment in emigrant diaries. None was mentioned more than Chimney Rock, pictured here: Photo: Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.

River for most of its length. The surrounding terrain is less changed by agriculture and other development than the previous Nebraska segments. The route in places traverses rangeland that appears much as it did in emigrant times.

As with previous segments, recreation use potential is principally in terms of interpretation and travel along public roads and highways. Prominent wagon ruts beyond the main ford of the South Platte River, visible for 1.7 miles along the ascent of California Hill, would be an interesting feature for an interpretive trail. Approximately half of the segment is cross-country, and further investigation may indicate additional trail opportunities.

Thirty-five historic sites along this part of the route provide a major opportunity for historic appreciation. Sixteen sites have high potential for public use, and seven of these need either interpretive development, acquisition, or both.

A cluster of historic sites is located in Ash Hollow State Historical Park. Perhaps the most impressive Oregon Trail ruts in Nebraska are found here, leading along a ridge and descending steep Windlass Hill to a well-known emigrant campground site at Ash Hollow. Interpretive trail and facility development in the area is only partially completed.

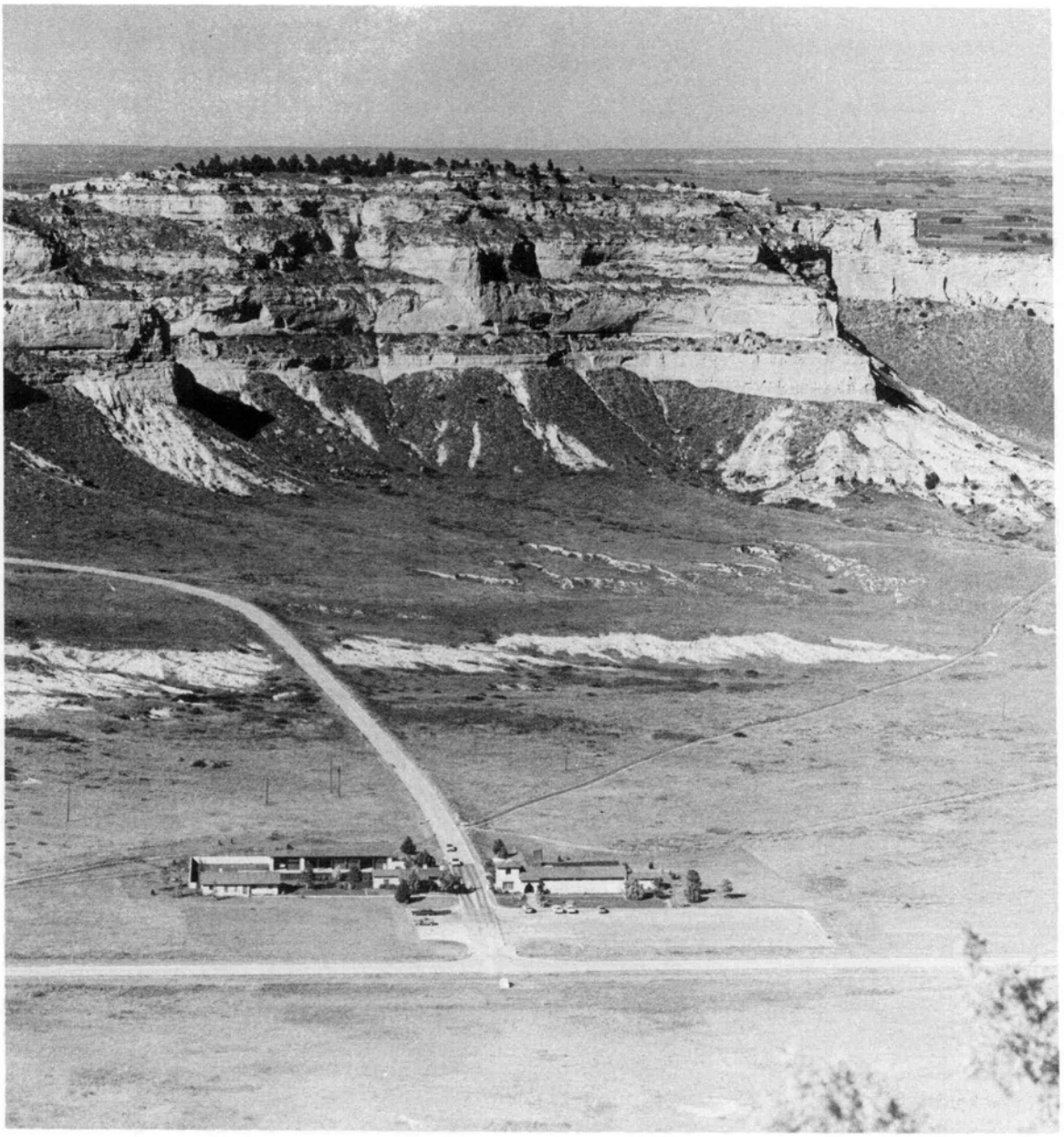
The western third of this segment parallels a range of eroded hills and mountains, containing several major emigrant landmarks. A jagged needle known as Chimney Rock received a great deal of attention in emigrant diaries. Additional recreation facilities and trails could be developed at this State-owned site. Another landmark rock formation in this area is Scotts Bluff, the location of a National Park Service interpretive facility. Although this national monument site is optimally developed, other historic sites in the area need interpretive development as points of interest for automobile and bicycle travelers.

Public Agencies - Nebraska

Approximately 56 percent of the route in Nebraska is in private ownership. The majority of the remaining 44 percent is on public lands along State and county roads and highways.

The National Park Service administers Scotts Bluff National Monument, a 3,000-acre area featuring an important Oregon Trail landmark, visible wagon ruts, and 4 miles of the route. In 1974, over 167,000 people visited a highly developed interpretive center and museum here. The National Park Service also cooperates with the Nebraska Historical Society and the City of Bayard in administration and interpretive programs at the Chimney Rock National Historic Site.

Perhaps the most impressive Oregon Trail ruts in Nebraska are found at Ash Hollow State Historical Park. The ruts follow a ridge (center of photo) and descent steep Windlass Hill (lower left) by several routes to Ash Hollow, site of a favorite emigrant campground. One set of descent ruts now is a deeply eroded gully. This partially-developed area could provide additional interpretive facilities and trails. Photo: Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.



Scotts Bluff National Monument, Nebraska. This 3,000-acre area, administered by the National Park Service, features an historically significant natural landmark and prominent Oregon Trail ruts. In 1974, about 167,000 people visited the interpretive center and museum here. Photo: Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.

The Department of the Army administers the Fort McPherson National Cemetery, a high-potential Oregon Trail site. The U. S. Forest Service, while not administering any land along the Oregon Trail route in Nebraska, is cooperating in historic interpretation and recreation planning along other routes that could be coordinated with the Oregon Trail.

The Nebraska State Historical Society plans and implements statewide historic preservation policy, and documents and coordinates marking of historic sites. The Society operates the Lincoln Museum; three branch museums, at Fort Robinson, Neligh Mills, and McCook; three trailer museums, at Chimney Rock and at two Interstate 80 rest areas; and the new leased school house museum at the Mud Springs Pony Express, Telegraph, and Stage Station. The Society's Director has been appointed by the Governor as the State Historic Preservation Officer under the National Historic Preservation Act. Local and county museums along the route provide additional interpretation of the Oregon Trail and related history.

The Nebraska Department of Roads maintains a series of rest areas spaced at regular intervals to serve Interstate 80 traffic on both east and west lanes. The Department cooperates in developing recreation facilities and in placing and maintaining interpretive historic markers at these areas where appropriate.

The Nebraska State Game and Parks Commission owns or manages 80 public recreation areas, comprising some 13,000 acres, along or close to the Oregon Trail route. This represents the majority of recreation areas along the route, and the majority of opportunities for Oregon Trail-related recreation. Included among these areas are three State historic parks directly related to the Oregon Trail and another with complementary interest. The Commission also manages a series of wildlife areas and waysides with potential for recreation and interpretation related to the Oregon Trail.

A potential for trails and other recreation opportunities close to the Oregon Trail route exists within the Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District, which parallels the route below Lewellen to Fort Kearny, and within the Platte Valley District. Reservoirs and several public recreation areas in these two power and irrigation districts are managed by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission for recreation use and fish and wildlife habitat. These areas could be further developed for overland and canoe trails, related in places to the Oregon Trail through interpretive development and connecting trails.

Land Use and Its Effect - Nebraska

The Nebraska countryside has changed greatly since pioneer times, and is still changing. The major part of the Oregon Trail in the State

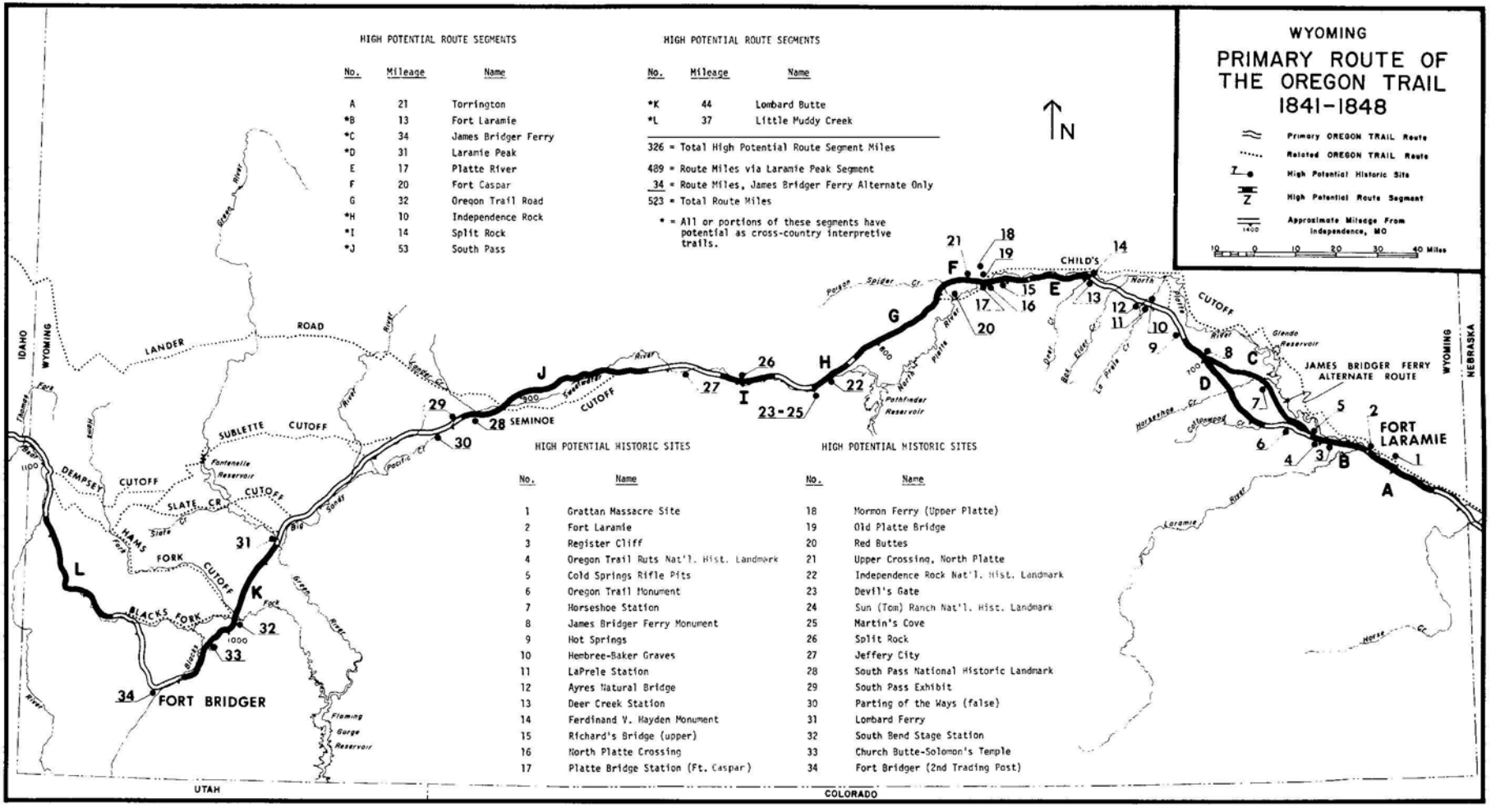
crosses farmland which has been under cultivation since before irrigation began in the 1890's. Intensive agricultural development has erased most traces of the trail, but some hay meadows show wagon ruts in the early spring.

Today, pump irrigation using center pivot sprinkler systems is converting additional hay and pasture land to row crops, and underlining the need to preserve remaining Oregon Trail remnants. Few historic remnants survived the early years of settlement, and there is a danger of losing what is left through additional agricultural and other development.

The route passes through few towns or cities in Nebraska, as it is generally south of the main settlement corridor. Where it does run close to towns, the local road systems provide better access to the route than in other areas.

D E S C R I P T I O N

Wyoming


WYOMING
PRIMARY ROUTE OF THE OREGON TRAIL 1841-1848
Primary OREGON TRAIL Route
Related OREGON TRAIL Route
High Potential Historic Site
High Potential Route Segment
Approximate Mileage From Independence, MO
10 0 10 20 30 40 Miles
HIGH POTENTIAL ROUTE SEGMENTS
No. Mileage Name
A 21 Torrington
*B 13 Fort Laramie
*C 34 James Bridger Ferry
*D 31 Laramie Peak
E 17 Platte River
F 20 Fort Caspar
G 32 Oregon Trail Road
*H 10 Independence Rock
*I 14 Split Rock
*J 53 South Pass
HIGH POTENTIAL ROUTE SEGMENTS
No. Mileage Name
*K 44 Lombard Butte
*L 37 Little Muddy Creek
326 = Total High Potential Route Segment Miles
489 = Route Miles via Laramie Peak Segment
34 = Route Miles, James Bridger Ferry Alternate Only
523 = Total Route Miles
* = All or portions of these segments have potential as cross-country interpretive trails.
N
HIGH POTENTIAL HISTORIC SITES
No. Name
1 Grattan Massacre Site
2 Fort Laramie
3 Register Cliff
4 Oregon Trail Ruts Nat'l. Hist. Landmark
5 Cold Springs Rifle Pits
6 Oregon Trail Monument
7 Horseshoe Station
8 James Bridger Ferry Monument
9 Hot Springs
10 Hembree-Baker Graves
11 LaPrele Station
12 Ayres Natural Bridge
13 Deer Creek Station
14 Ferdinand V. Hayden Monument
15 Richard's Bridge (upper)
16 North Platte Crossing
17 Platte Bridge Station (Ft. Caspar)
HIGH POTENTIAL HISTORIC SITES
No. Name
18 Mormon Ferry (Upper Platte)
19 Old Platte Bridge
20 Red Buttes
21 Upper Crossing, North Platte
22 Independence Rock Nat'l. Hist. Landmark
23 Devil's Gate
24 Sun (Tom) Ranch Nat'l. Hist. Landmark
25 Martin's Cove
26 Split Rock
27 Jeffery City
28 South Pass National Historic Landmark
29 South Pass Exhibit
30 Parting of the Ways (false)
31 Lombard Ferry
32 South Bend Stage Station
33 Church Butte-Solomon's Temple
34 Fort Bridger (2nd Trading Post)
IDAHO
WYOMING
NEBRASKA
UTAH
COLORADO
LANDER ROAD
SUBLETTE CUTOFF
DEMPSEY CUTOFF
SLATE CR. CUTOFF
HAMS FORK CUTOFF
BLACKS FORK
SEMINOE CUTOFF
SEMINOE
CHILD'S
NORTH PLATTE CUTOFF
JAMES BRIDGER FERRY ALTERNATE ROUTE
FORT LARAMIE
FORT BRIDGER
Fontenelle Reservoir
Pathfinder Reservoir
Glendo Reservoir
Flaming Gorge Reservoir
Green River
Big Sandy
Pacific Cr.
Spider Cr.
Poison Spider Cr.
Bat Creek
Sweetwater River
Laramie River
Horse Cr.
Cottonwood Cr.
Horseshoe Cr.
Slate Cr.
Beaver Creek
Fork
Thomas
Muddy
Little
Green
Sweetwater
North Platte
La Prele Cr.
A
B
C
D
E
F
G
H
I
J
K
L

DESCRIPTION - WYOMING

The emigrant wagon trains had been on the trail for nearly 2 months and had traveled more than 600 miles when they reached the present State of Wyoming. Yet they were scarcely a third of the way to the Willamette Valley. The journey's beginning was but a dim memory, and the Oregon Trail at this point seemed to stretch endlessly before them.

A large share of Oregon Trail history is found within Wyoming's borders. The number of historic sites in the State nearly equals the combined total for all other Oregon Trail states. Only about one-fourth of the high-potential sites have received interpretive development, leaving a large potential for additional preservation and development efforts. The Oregon Trail is still visible across many miles of Wyoming's rangeland, providing a largely untapped recreation resource for the establishment of interpretive trails.

The Route Through Wyoming

The distance across Wyoming along the main route of the Oregon Trail is 489 miles. However, near Guernsey, the primary trail divides into two alternate routes, each 34 miles long. For purposes of this study, both alternates are included for a total primary route mileage of 523 miles.

Twelve route segments totaling 326 miles have been identified as having high potential for recreation use. Visible wagon ruts, continuous in some places for many miles, are present along each of these segments. The land they cross is some of the most remote and least developed along the entire Oregon Trail route. The terrain varies from level plains to rough and broken sagebrush rangeland.

Four of the 12 high-potential route segments are classified as roaded, one is cross-country, and the remaining seven contain both access categories. The cross-country portions of the route have potential as interpretive trails. Development of the cross-country segments as trails for the public would require only additional signing, public information, and interpretive displays, except where protective development is needed to preserve historic remnants. The extent of such protective development that is needed is not known, and will require further investigation.

The roaded segments could be marked for automobile travelers. Bicyclists also would find these segments interesting, although many of the roads are dirt or gravel and difficult for bicycle travel.

Over 200 historic sites have been identified along the route in Wyoming. Thirty-four of these have high potential for public recreational use,

of which 21 are located along high-potential route segments. Twenty-three of the high-potential sites are either undeveloped or only partially developed. The type of development most commonly needed includes interpretive panels and displays, access roads and trails, and protective development. Many sites not classified as high potential in this study are significant locally, and would provide additional points of general interest with minimal expenditures for signing and interpretation.

High-Potential Route Segments - Wyoming

Torrington Segment (21 miles). The route, still visible in a few places, is followed by public roads along the south bank of the North Platte River. Most of the adjacent land is under cultivation, although a portion of the segment traverses unplowed rangeland. With additional interpretive signing and some road improvement, this segment would be historically interesting to motorists and bicyclists. The route passes the site of a military-Indian encounter known as the Grattan Massacre. The wooded river bank, nearby hills and ridges, and distant mountains provide visual contrast to the level terrain along the route, giving the segment high potential for recreation, as well as for historic interpretation.

Fort Laramie Segment (13 miles). This segment is one of the richest in Wyoming with respect to historic sites and prominent Oregon Trail remnants. It begins at Fort Laramie National Historic Site, developed and administered by the National Park Service. A museum and living history program, together with reconstructed buildings, provide insight into the many facets of the site's history.

Farther along, the segment passes two additional high-potential sites and several of lesser consequence. Some of the most impressive wagon ruts along the Oregon Trail, etched several feet into sandstone, are found near Guernsey. An access trail and interpretive signs have been developed with Land and Water Conservation Fund assistance. Developments at the site also interpret Register Cliff, a sandstone escarpment bearing emigrant signatures.

The segment has received considerable development for public use. A cross-country portion of the route may have potential as a hiking and horseback trail, and additional interpretation is needed at some of the historic sites. Lake Guernsey State Park provides camping, hunting, and fishing within a few miles of the Oregon Trail route. The terrain along this segment is gently rolling to broken, is typically covered with sagebrush and juniper, and has high visual appeal.

James Bridger Ferry Segment (34 miles). A few miles west of Guernsey, the route divides into two alternate routes for 34 miles. This segment follows the entire length of the northern route. The terrain is hilly

Fort Laramie Segment, Wyoming. The National Park Service operates a museum and living history program here at Fort Laramie National Historic Site, and has undertaken a major reconstruction program. At this important way-station, first a trading post and later a military encampment, the emigrants received supplies, repairs, and protection from Indians. Photo: Wyoming Travel Commission.

Fort Laramie Segment, Wyoming. Some of the most impressive wagon ruts along the Oregon Trail, etched several feet into sandstone, are found near Guernsey. Although the segment has received considerable interpretive development, a cross-country portion of the route also may have potential as a hiking and horseback trail. Photo: Wyoming Travel Commission.

to broken rangeland clad in sagebrush and juniper, and is largely roadless. With provision for access across private land and appropriate signing, most of this segment would be a scenic interpretive trail along intermittent Oregon Trail ruts.

Laramie Peak Segment (31 miles). The segment begins along the southern alternate route west of Guernsey. It continues past its intersection with the *James Bridger Ferry Segment*, which it resembles with respect to terrain and public recreation potentials. The route circles the base of pine covered Laramie Peak, traversing broken rangeland noted in emigrant diaries for its scenic vistas. This segment leads mostly cross-country, and has high trail potential.

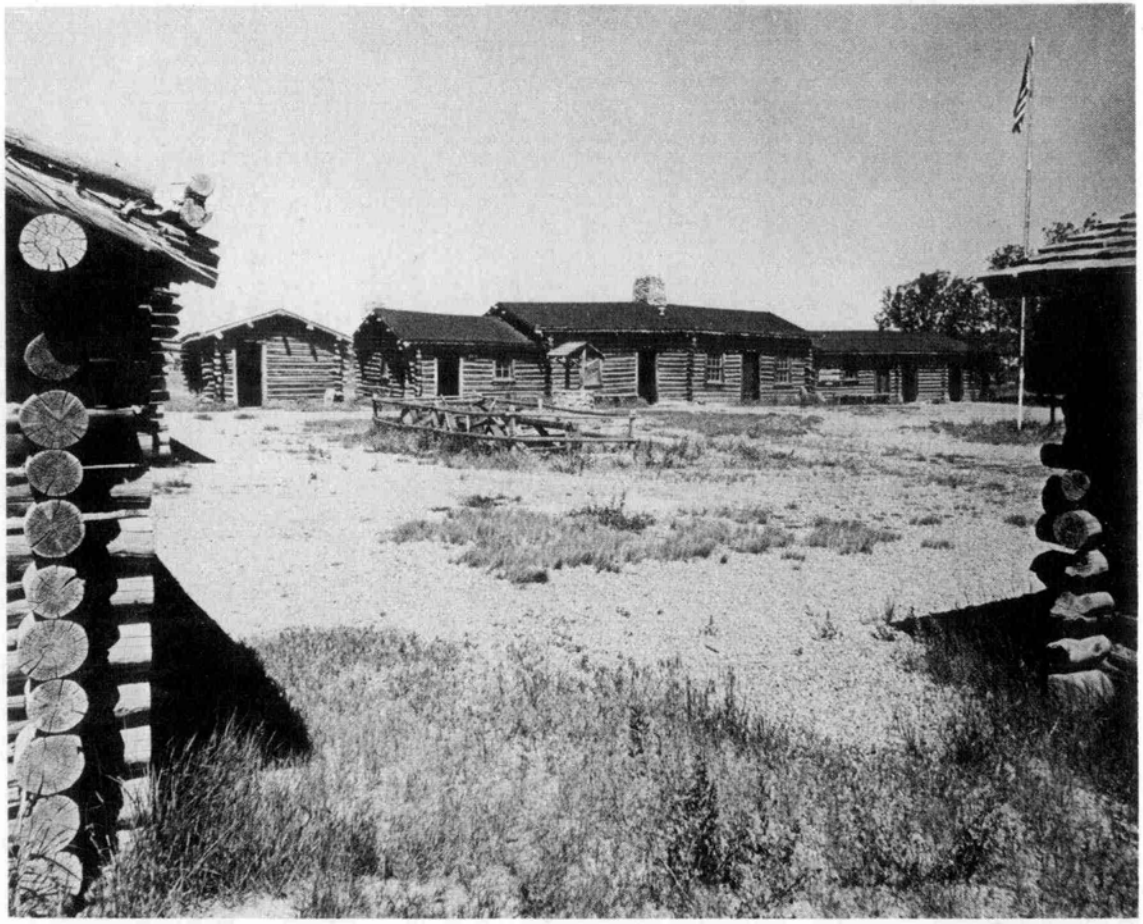
Platte River Segment (22 miles). Paved roads make this entire segment accessible by auto and bicycle. Oregon Trail ruts have survived farming and other development along the North Platte River, and in many places are visible from the road. Historic markers exist at points of interest. Visible trail remnants need protection from further land development.

Fort Caspar Segment (15 miles). This is Wyoming's only urban high-potential segment, passing through the town of Casper--spelling differs from that of the town's namesake. The segment is roaded and includes seven high-potential historic sites. One of these is Fort Caspar, a military outpost restored in the 1930's as a Works Progress Administration project and now operated by the City of Casper as a tourist attraction.

The Oregon Trail route crosses the North Platte River near the fort, and soon thereafter turns away from the river system regarded as an old friend by the emigrants after several hundred miles of close association. The crossing sites have high potential for interpretive development, and additional directional signs are needed along the segment.

Oregon Trail Road Segment (32 miles). A dirt county road, aptly named the Oregon Trail Road, follows the wagon tracks through nearly uninhabited, hilly rangeland. With directional and interpretive signing, motorists could follow this back-country segment and experience a landscape largely as it was during emigrant travel. Historic sites along the route here, although not classed as high-potential, provide opportunities for interpretive signs.

Independence Rock Segment (10 miles). This largely roaded segment passes two of the most widely known historic sites on the Oregon Trail route. One is Independence Rock, an imposing dome of igneous rock upon which seemingly every passing emigrant carved his name. This famous "register of the desert" is the location of a major Historic State Park.



Fort Caspar Segment, Wyoming. Fort Caspar, a former military outpost, was restored during the 1930's and now is operated by the City of Casper as a public attraction. This historic site is located on Wyoming's only urban high-potential route segment. Photo: Wyoming Travel Commission.

Independence Rock Segment, Wyoming. Independence Rock, one of the most widely known historic sites on the Oregon Trail, is an imposing igneous dome on the banks of the Sweetwater River. An estimated 40 to 50 thousand signatures of early travelers have been inscribed on this "register of the desert." An Historic State Park with a staffed interpretive center is planned here. Photo: Wyoming Travel Commission.

Independence Rock Segment, Wyoming. Beyond Independence Rock, the Sweetwater River flows through this narrow, rock-walled cleft known to the emigrants as Devils Gate. A trail to Devils Gate and other short interpretive trails warrant development along this highly scenic route segment. Photo: Wyoming Travel Commission

Little Muddy Creek Segment (37 miles). This final Wyoming segment leads mostly cross-country through rough, hilly rangeland and across the Bear River Divide. Hiking and horseback trails could be developed next to visible Oregon Trail ruts, featuring spectacular views of the Bear River Valley. Man's impact here has been light, and the segment would be especially attractive to those who wish to follow a relatively unaltered part of the Oregon Trail on foot or horseback.

Public Agencies - Wyoming

Seventy-nine percent of the route in Wyoming (412 miles) is on publicly owned land. Public ownership is considerably greater than in any other state, both proportionally and in miles of route. Most of the visible route segments having trail potential in Wyoming are on public land. A tremendous opportunity exists for providing miles of interpretive and recreational trails at relatively low cost. Public agencies have been more active in Wyoming than in other states in marking cross-country portions of the route for public travel, but more route marking and historic interpretation could be provided along these segments.

The Bureau of Land Management administers 262 miles of the Oregon Trail route in Wyoming. The Bureau is classifying its lands according to their optimum use and is identifying lands primarily of value for recreation. The Oregon Trail route is being incorporated into management plans, and management policy for preservation and administration of historic remnants is being formulated. Notable historic sites along the route have been nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.

The Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service cooperatively administer the Lander Road for public recreation. This Oregon Trail cutoff route in western Wyoming and eastern Idaho was built by the Federal government in 1858. Although not considered part of the Oregon Trail primary route, it provides related historic interpretation and recreation opportunities. A public brochure has been prepared to facilitate public use of the Lander Road.

The Bureau of Land Management also has cooperated with local historical societies, particularly in Sublette County, to install markers along 250 miles of the Oregon Trail and Lander Road routes in Wyoming. Such cooperative efforts also have resulted in marking and protecting historic graves and other sites. Three wayside interpretive exhibits, including trail markers, to commemorate the Nation's Bicentennial, have been completed.

The National Park Service administers the Fort Laramie National Historic Site in eastern Wyoming. A military post here was a major way station for Oregon Trail emigrants, providing protection from Indians,

limited supplies, and repairs. The Park Service has partially completed restoring the site's buildings and grounds.

The long-standing interest of public agencies and private groups accounts for the large number of Oregon Trail historic sites identified in Wyoming. Among the earliest historic commemorative efforts were those of the Sons and Daughters of the American Revolution, who began erecting monuments along the Oregon Trail and other historic routes in 1894. In 1913, the State created a commission to mark the Oregon Trail and historic sites. Many of the early markers and monuments erected along the route are still in existence.

The Director of the State Recreation Commission is the State Historic Preservation Officer under the National Historic Preservation Act, and also administers the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The Commission administers State parks and other public recreation areas, including six recreation areas and numerous historic sites related to the Oregon Trail. Historic preservation and interpretive development by citizen groups is facilitated by the Commission's authority to grant permission to these groups to improve, alter, or restore a historic landmark or site. The Commission employed Mr. Paul Henderson to conduct research on the location of the Oregon Trail and other historic routes. Mr. Henderson has pursued his investigations for many years, and is an acknowledged expert on the location of the eastern half of the Oregon Trail.

The Wyoming State Archives and Historical Department collects, preserves, displays, and interprets materials illustrating the State's history and development. These materials include documents, artifacts, and artwork related to the Oregon Trail. They are made available to the public and researchers through a library, publications, a State and branch museums, and a State art gallery. The Department also serves as executive headquarters for the Wyoming State Historical Society.

The Wyoming Travel Commission conducts promotional activities for the State's large tourism industry. The Commission recognizes the value of the Oregon Trail to tourism, and works closely with the Recreation Commission on promotional activities related to the route.

Much of the Oregon Trail route through Wyoming is followed closely by public roads administered by the Wyoming Highway Department. The Highway Department coordinates with the Recreation Commission in the provision of interpretive signs and facilities along highways and at safety rest areas. The two agencies also coordinate planned highway construction to provide for preservation and public use of historic sites along the proposed rights-of-way.

Two private organizations actively concerned with historic preservation are the Wyoming State Historical Society and the Wyoming Archeological

Society. The former has 21 chapters located in all but two of Wyoming's counties. Many are active in Oregon Trail-related preservation projects. The Archeological Society's eight chapters perform investigative work related to the Oregon Trail and other historic routes and sites.

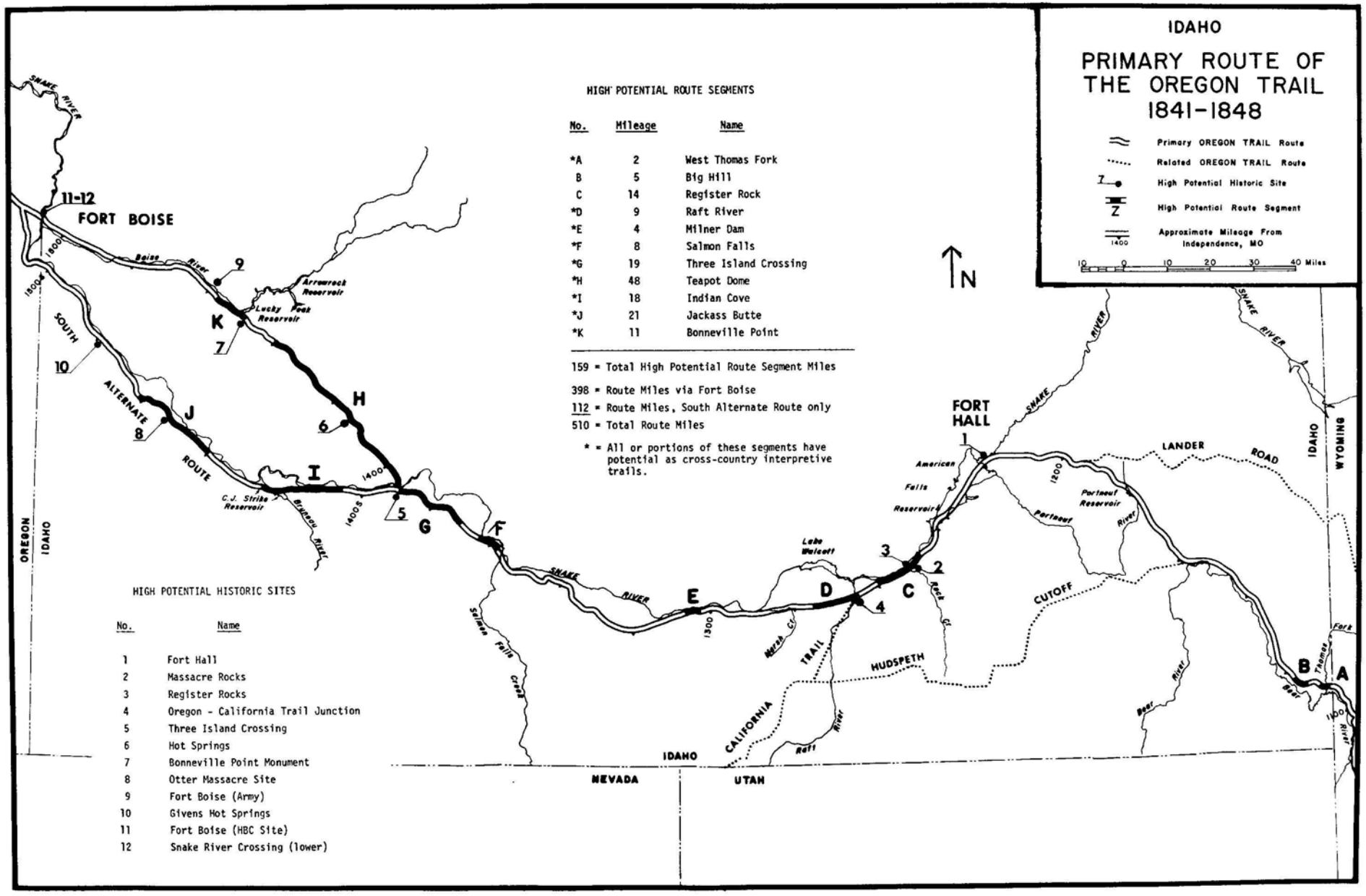
Land Use and Its Effect - Wyoming

Much of the land along the primary route in Wyoming has traditionally been used for grazing by both wild and domestic animals. Most of this land has never been cultivated. Thus, many miles of the historic trail route remain visible.

Twenty-one percent of the route is in private ownership. Most of this portion follows irrigated valleys where farming has largely erased trail remnants. Wyoming is a sparsely populated State, and urban development has disturbed little of the Oregon Trail.

D E S C R I P T I O N

Idaho


IDAHO
PRIMARY ROUTE OF THE OREGON TRAIL 1841-1848
Primary OREGON TRAIL Route
Related OREGON TRAIL Route
High Potential Historic Site
High Potential Route Segment
Approximate Mileage From Independence, MO
10 0 10 20 30 40 Miles
HIGH POTENTIAL ROUTE SEGMENTS
No. Mileage Name
*A 2 West Thomas Fork
B 5 Big Hill
C 14 Register Rock
*D 9 Raft River
*E 4 Milner Dam
*F 8 Salmon Falls
*G 19 Three Island Crossing
*H 48 Teapot Dome
*I 18 Indian Cove
*J 21 Jackass Butte
*K 11 Bonneville Point
159 = Total High Potential Route Segment Miles
398 = Route Miles via Fort Boise
112 = Route Miles, South Alternate Route only
510 = Total Route Miles
* = All or portions of these segments have potential as cross-country interpretive trails.
HIGH POTENTIAL HISTORIC SITES
No. Name
1 Fort Hall
2 Massacre Rocks
3 Register Rocks
4 Oregon - California Trail Junction
5 Three Island Crossing
6 Hot Springs
7 Bonneville Point Monument
8 Otter Massacre Site
9 Fort Boise (Army)
10 Givens Hot Springs
11 Fort Boise (HBC Site)
12 Snake River Crossing (lower)
N
SNAKE RIVER
11-12
FORT BOISE
1800
Boise River
9
Arrowrock Reservoir
Lucky Peak Reservoir
K
7
1500
SOUTH
10
ALTERNATE
ROUTE
8
J
H
6
I
1400
C.J. Strike Reservoir
Bruneau River
1400S
5
G
F
SNAKE RIVER
E
1300
Salmon Falls Creek
Lake Walcott
3
2
D
C
4
Rock Cr.
Marsh Cr.
TRAIL
HUDSPETH
CUTOFF
CALIFORNIA
Raft River
IDAHO
NEVADA
UTAH
OREGON
IDAHO
FORT HALL
1
SNAKE RIVER
American Falls Reservoir
LANDER
ROAD
1200
Portneuf Reservoir
Portneuf River
SNAKE RIVER
IDAHO
WYOMING
B
A
Bear River
Fork
Thomas
1100

DESCRIPTION - IDAHO

The Oregon Trail Route enters Idaho in the scenic, pastoral Thomas Fork Valley. When they reached this point, the emigrants had traveled 1,100 miles from Missouri across the present States of Kansas, Nebraska, and Wyoming. They were slightly more than halfway in their 6-month journey to the Willamette Valley.

Ruts left by the emigrants' wagons are still visible across many miles of southern Idaho's unplowed rangeland. For the most part, the route itself and many historic sites along it remain undeveloped as a public recreation resource. More could be done in Idaho to make the Oregon Trail accessible and understandable to the public, and to preserve remaining traces for future recreation use.

The Route Through Idaho

The length of the Oregon Trail route in Idaho, for those wagon trains that crossed the Snake River at Three Island Crossing, is 398 miles. The South Alternate Route was followed by those who could not negotiate Three Island Crossing. Considered part of the primary route, it adds another 112 miles within the State. Of the total 510 miles of primary route, 159 miles in 11 segments were found to have high potential for public use--historic interpretation and/or recreation. The route generally has not been marked to facilitate retracing by the public.

Visible Oregon Trail ruts, sometimes several miles in length, are found along all of the 11 high-potential route segments. The country traversed by several of these segments appears much as it did to the emigrants. Except for a few miles through the Portneuf Range, the vegetation is typically sagebrush-grass rangeland, relatively undisturbed. Many people find the broad vistas, the rocky uplands, and the basalt formations of this high desert visually exciting.

Of the 11 high-potential route segments, five are classified as cross-country, two are roaded, and the four remaining segments contain both access categories. One roaded segment will become a freeway segment with the completion of Interstate 15-W through Massacre Rocks State Park.

The cross-country segments are potential hiking and riding trails. The longer, more remote of these may appeal more to horsemen than to foot travelers because of the nature of the terrain. Cross-country segments in many areas show evidence of current travel by motorized vehicles.

Development needed for public use of the cross-country, high-potential segments on public land would be mainly route marking, directional

signing, and interpretive devices. Little, if any, new trail construction would be needed for access, as these segments are in open country and easily traversed by foot or horseback. Further investigation likely will indicate a need to provide trails adjacent to vulnerable wagon ruts as a protective measure in some areas.

Interpretation at points of interest and route markers are needed along the roaded segments to make them usable by the public. Short interpretive trails could be developed next to some of the roaded segments, which would allow the motorist or bicyclist to leave his vehicle for brief walks next to Oregon Trail wagon ruts.

A total of 52 Oregon Trail historic sites have been identified in Idaho, 12 of which have high public use potential. Two are sites of Hudson's Bay Company trading posts of great significance to the emigrants, Fort Hall and Fort Boise. Both sites are considered by historians and others to be worthy of reconstruction. Seven of the high-potential sites are located along high-potential route segments; the remaining five provide points of historic interest along other portions of the route. Nine high-potential sites are either undeveloped or only partially developed.

High-Potential Route Segments - Idaho

West Thomas Fork Segment (2 miles). Prominent, discontinuous wagon ruts cross a long, grassy ridge along two routes 1/2 mile apart. Now an easy 1-mile walk from U. S. 30, this segment offers potential for interpretive trails next to the wagon ruts. Here, one could escape the noise of traffic and reflect on quiet vistas much as they appeared in wagon train days.

Big Hill Segment (5 miles). A low-standard dirt road follows the route over a long ridge known to the emigrants as Big Hill. The climb and descent are in steep canyon bottoms. With provision of public access, this segment could be followed along a back-country road close to prominent wagon ruts. Continuous ruts are visible along a 2-mile, cross-country variation of the route, giving potential for a short interpretive trail.

Register Rock Segment (14 miles). This segment follows a two-lane highway (U. S. 30-N) along a narrow bench bordering the Snake River. Although road construction has erased much of the route, prominent wagon ruts still remain outside the highway right-of-way. The basalt-rimmed river canyon and adjacent juniper, sagebrush, and rock outcroppings give the area high visual appeal. In addition to the Oregon Trail, the area is interesting for its lava flows, the prehistoric Bonneville Flood, and the mining of placer gold deposits at Bonanza Bar. The river and adjacent uplands provide opportunities for boating, fishing, waterfowl hunting, hiking, photography, and other activities.

West Thomas Fork Segment, Idaho. Four miles of wagon ruts across a grassy ridge offer potential for interpretive trails, where one could escape the noise of traffic and reflect on quiet vistas much as they appeared in wagon train days. Oregon Trail ruts are visible here just below center.

Register Rock Segment, Idaho. The basalt-rimmed Snake River gives this segment high visual appeal and provides opportunities for water-related activities close to the Oregon Trail. A staffed interpretive center here at Massacre Rocks State Park features exhibits of the area's cultural and geologic history.

Register Rock Segment, Idaho. Two miles of prominent wagon ruts (grassy depression, foreground) in Massacre Rocks State Park could be marked as an interpretive trail. Nearby sites of 1862 Indian attacks on wagon trains, now unmarked, also have potential for interpretive development.

Approximately 5 miles of the segment are in Massacre Rocks State Park, named for a series of Indian attacks on wagon trains in 1862. A staffed interpretive center in the park provides displays and information on the area's cultural and geologic history. Possibilities for additional development include an Oregon Trail interpretive trail featuring 2 miles of prominent wagon ruts, and interpretation of the sites involved in the 1862 Indian attacks.

Prominent wagon ruts ascending Cold Water Hill, at the southwestern end of the segment, are visible from the highway. The Fish and Wildlife Service could participate in interpreting a visible portion of the route here across a corner of the Minidoka National Wildlife Refuge.

Raft River Segment (9 miles). Nine miles of continuous wagon ruts cross a rocky, sagebrush and greasewood-covered plain. In places, the old trail has been etched into the lava rock. Although the stark landscape here may lack universal scenic appeal, this segment provides a good opportunity for reliving the Oregon Trail experience. It is mostly out of sight and sound of civilization, and could be an interesting interpretive trail. The presence of the Oregon-California Trail Junction on this segment provides additional interpretive potential.

Milner Dam Segment (4 miles). Discontinuous, often prominent wagon ruts cross an isolated area of undeveloped public domain surrounded by farms. The gently rolling landscape, vegetated by sagebrush and grass, is a pleasant oasis in this agricultural area. Some portions of the ruts have been altered by motorized vehicle travel, while others appear untouched since the last wagon wheel rolled past.

The Bureau of Land Management is currently working with youth groups who are from Burley, Twin Falls, Rupert, and other nearby towns and are using the area as an outdoor history classroom. Still undeveloped for public use, the segment could be developed as an interpretive trail. The adjacent Snake River, impounded behind Milner Dam, provides fishing, waterfowl hunting, and water sports.

Salmon Falls Segment (8 miles). This segment generally follows public roads along the Snake River. It could be marked for motorists and bicyclists and would provide views of scenic natural features that also had visual appeal for the emigrants. One of these is Thousand Springs, a series of underground streams that erupt as waterfalls along basalt cliffs. Another is Upper Salmon Falls, an outstanding feature with exceptional opportunities for interpretation and recreation. Three miles of the segment leave the road to traverse an arid benchland, giving an opportunity for an interpretive trail next to visible wagon ruts.

Three Island Crossing Segment (19 miles). The Oregon Trail is still visible in places across a dry, sagebrush-covered plain, although

recent wheat farming has erased much of the route. This segment includes Three Island Crossing, one of the most feared river crossings along the trail. The Idaho Parks and Recreation Department now operates a staffed interpretive facility at Three Island Crossing State Park, located on the north bank of the river.

The segment has potential as a back-country interpretive area with short cross-country trails. An Oregon Trail overlook could be located at the beginning of descent ruts to Three Island Crossing and a scenic interpretive trail could follow along the descent route to the crossing site.

Teapot Dome Segment (48 miles). Northwest from Three Island Crossing, the route travels along the base of scenic foothills north of irrigated farmlands adjoining the Snake River. Because of its location, most of the route here has escaped cultivation and many miles of wagon ruts are still visible. Several historic sites have potential for interpretive development.

Twenty-seven miles of the segment are cross-country. The terrain is pleasant to the eye, featuring views of undulating sagebrush and grasslands rimmed on the north by hills and basalt cliffs. The route here would be an appealing horseback trail.

The remaining 21 miles of the segment follow dirt and gravel secondary public roads. Wagon ruts visible intermittently along the roads offer several possibilities for short interpretive trails.

Bonneville Point Segment (11 miles). From Bonneville Point, the Oregon Trail route descends a long ridge to the Boise River, dropping 1,100 feet in 11 miles. The sagebrush-grass vegetation here remains largely undisturbed and pronounced wagon ruts are visible for virtually the entire length of the segment.

The segment is on the outskirts of Boise (population 75,000), and would make an excellent hiking and horseback interpretive trail. Such a trail also would be scenic, offering unrestricted views of the city and surrounding countryside. The land immediately north of the segment along its upper end slopes steeply down to Lucky Peak Reservoir, providing opportunities for connecting side trails and scenic overlooks.

Most of the land traversed by the segment is in private ownership, and that at the lower end may be developed as a housing subdivision. Staff from the Ada Council of Governments and public agencies participating in the study agree that preservation of this part of the route for public trail purposes is highly desirable, but to date there is no plan for action.

Indian Cove Segment (18 miles). This segment is the first of two located along the South Alternate, a dry and difficult route south of

Three Island Crossing Segment, Idaho. The segment ends at Three Island Crossing on the Snake River, one of the most feared river crossings along the Oregon Trail. A State Park on the North bank here includes a staffed interpretive center (not shown). There is potential for an overlook and a trail along descent ruts on the south bank (photo background).

the Snake River followed by emigrants who could not ford the Snake at Three Island Crossing.

An interpretive route for motorists and bicyclists could be developed along the roaded portions of this segment to tie in with two popular recreation areas; C. J. Strike Reservoir and nearby Bruneau Dunes State Park. The reservoir is scenic, and offers fishing, waterfowl hunting, and other water-based activities. A visitor to the State park can fish, swim, camp, and wander over giant inland sand dunes. A 4-mile, cross-country portion of the segment just east of the reservoir could be an interpretive foot and horseback trail along visible Oregon Trail ruts.

Jackass Butte Segment (21 miles). The terrain crossed by this segment is the most remote and forbidding along the Oregon Trail in Idaho. Steep-sided arid buttes with names like Jackass, Castle, Wildhorse, and Sinker dominate the desert landscape. On the segment's 21 miles, 18 miles of the trail are still visible, sometimes as grooves worn into the rock itself. The route here runs cross-country, bisected by only a few low-standard dirt roads.

With provision for public access through or around a private ranch, this segment offers high potential for a back-country interpretive trail. Short side trails could connect with the nearby Snake River Birds of Prey Natural Area, a scenic, wild canyon under Bureau of Land Management jurisdiction.

Public Agencies - Idaho

One hundred seventy-three miles (34 percent) of the primary route in Idaho are on publicly owned lands and 337 miles (66 percent) are privately owned.

The Bureau of Land Management administers 119 miles (23 percent) of the route in Idaho. The Bureau has done considerable route research on the Oregon Trail and other historic trails located on public domain lands in the State. In addition to work by staff personnel, the Bureau contracted with a private consultant, Dr. Howard Ross Cramer, to locate routes of the Oregon Trail, California Trail, and Hudspeth's Cutoff in eastern Idaho. The Bureau of Land Management is presently mapping the Oregon Trail and other historic routes in detail and incorporating them into management plans.

The Forest Service, although not directly concerned with the primary Oregon Trail route in Idaho, administers 10 miles of Idaho's portion of the Lander Road, an alternate route constructed by the Federal Government in 1858. Visible remnants of the road on the Caribou National Forest offer potential for roadside and trail interpretive development. The Lander Road has been incorporated into Forest Service management planning in Idaho and Wyoming.

Jackass Butte Segment, Idaho (South Alternate Route). The terrain here is the most remote and forbidding along the Oregon Trail in Idaho. Eighteen miles of wagon ruts are still visible, sometimes as grooves worn into the rock itself. If marked as an interpretive trail, the segment probably would have particular appeal for horseback travel.

The Idaho State Historical Society has broad responsibilities for researching historic route locations and for cooperating with other public agencies in route mapping and interpretive programs. The Director of the Society is the Governor's designated State Historic Preservation Officer, responsible for State activities under the National Historic Preservation Act. The Society assists the Bureau of Land Management and other agencies in Oregon Trail route location work and conducts route documentation.

The Society also furnishes historical data for the Idaho Department of Highways' historical sign program and Oregon Trail map brochure. Other Society activities involving the Oregon Trail include conducting field tours along parts of the route by school and other groups, cooperating in activities of county and other local historical societies, and furnishing information to others for historical research.

The Idaho Department of Highways installs and maintains signs at historical locations along the State's highways. Several 4- by 8-foot panels interpret Oregon Trail sites. The Department also publishes a popular map booklet of the Oregon Trail in Idaho, for public distribution. The booklet was reprinted as a Bicentennial project.

The Idaho Department of Parks, along with the Idaho State Historical Society, was a major study participant within the State. Massacre Rocks and Three Island Crossing State Parks are located along high-potential segments of the Oregon Trail route. Oregon Trail interpretation is featured at staffed visitor centers in each park. Additional interpretive displays and trails could be developed in these two parks.

High-potential route segments pass sufficiently close to other State parks to warrant evaluation of Oregon Trail interpretation potentials. The Department of Parks and Recreation could become more involved along the Oregon Trail through the selective acquisition of route segments and historic sites now in private ownership. The Department of Highways and the Idaho State Historical Society could cooperate to develop additional Oregon Trail interpretation and information facilities at highway safety rest areas, as is being done in Oregon (See DESCRIPTION - OREGON AND WASHINGTON). Future activities also could involve cooperative efforts with the Bureau of Land Management.

Indian Lands - Idaho

Thirty-seven miles of the primary route are located on Indian lands of the Fort Hall Reservation. The Lander Road, constructed as a cutoff route to facilitate emigrant travel, rejoins the primary Oregon Trail route on the reservation. The eastern part of the reservation is mountainous and very scenic. Steep, aspen-covered slopes and beaver ponds linked by clear alpine streams contrast with the sagebrush desert common to most of Idaho's portion of the Oregon Trail. The route generally is followed closely by dirt and gravel roads, and is visible in many areas.

The reservation, however, is closed to public entry. The Bannock and Shoshone Tribes generally have not wanted to open the reservation to tourists. The Oregon Trail route across the reservation was not designated a high-potential segment because it is not accessible.

Presence of the Oregon Trail route on the reservation, including the historically significant site of old Fort Hall, provides the tribes an opportunity to interpret the tremendous impact of the westward settler migration on their way of life.

Land Use and Its Effect - Idaho

Approximately 250 miles[1/] (50 percent) of the primary route through Idaho cross cultivated farmland. Most of the cropland is under irrigation, although portions of the route in the southeast corner of the State traverse dryland wheat fields. Visible evidence of the Oregon Trail in cultivated farmland has been largely lost due to farming activity, road construction, other development, and natural processes.

Considerable open rangeland along the route recently has been brought under the plow and this trend is continuing. Information on the extent of recent cultivation was not readily available and the above figures may underestimate the extent of the Oregon Trail route which passes through farmland. New croplands along the route were seen on desert land entries[2/] on public domain lands west of Twin Falls, and new wheat fields were seen northwest of Soda Springs. Where Oregon Trail ruts are prominent, they often remain visible in fields for the first few years of cultivation.

The route passes through 12 towns and cities in Idaho, including the capital city of Boise. Approximately 15 miles (3 percent) of the route are located within these developed areas, and visible historic remnants have mostly been lost.

Twenty-four miles of the route (5 percent) now lie under the waters of four reservoirs. American Falls Reservoir accounts for 17 miles of flooded route.

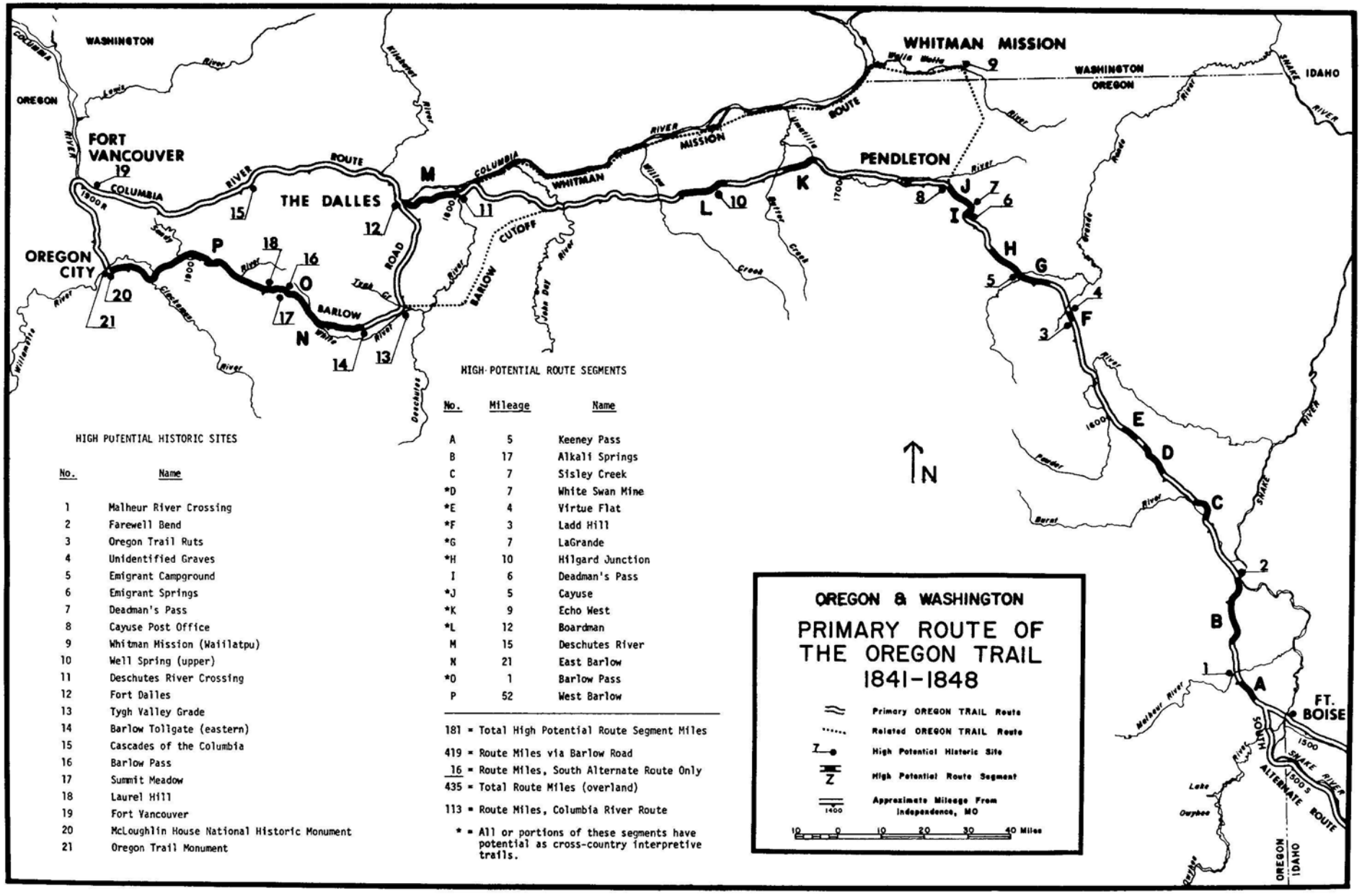
The remainder of the route in Idaho (219 miles) mostly traverses undeveloped rangeland grazed by cattle and sheep. Much of this land is public domain administered by the Bureau of Land Management. It is here that most of the visible Oregon Trail segments remain, although many miles have been erased by construction of roads and highways, powerlines, and pipelines.

1/ Source: Atlas of the Pacific Northwest, 1968, Richard M. Highsmith and Jon M. Leverenz, Oregon State University Press.

2/ Agricultural development under the Desert Land Act of 1877.

D E S C R I P T I O N

Oregon and Washington



HIGH PUTENTIAL HISTORIC SITES

No.	Name
1	Malheur River Crossing
2	Farewell Bend
3	Oregon Trail Ruts
4	Unidentified Graves
5	Emigrant Campground
6	Emigrant Springs
7	Deadman's Pass
8	Cayuse Post Office
9	Whitman Mission (Waiilatpu)
10	Well Spring (upper)
11	Deschutes River Crossing
12	Fort Dalles
13	Tygh Valley Grade
14	Barlow Tollgate (eastern)
15	Cascades of the Columbia
16	Barlow Pass
17	Summit Meadow
18	Laurel Hill
19	Fort Vancouver
20	McLoughlin House National Historic Monument
21	Oregon Trail Monument

HIGH POTENTIAL ROUTE SEGMENTS

No.	Mileage	Name
A	5	Keeney Pass
B	17	Alkali Springs
C	7	Sisley Creek
*D	7	White Swan Mine
*E	4	Virtue Flat
*F	3	Ladd Hill
*G	7	LaGrande
*H	10	Hilgard Junction
I	6	Deadman's Pass
*J	5	Cayuse
*K	9	Echo West
*L	12	Boardman
M	15	Deschutes River
N	21	East Barlow
*O	1	Barlow Pass
P	52	West Barlow

181 = Total High Potential Route Segment Miles

419 = Route Miles via Barlow Road

16 = Route Miles, South Alternate Route Only

435 = Total Route Miles (overland)

113 = Route Miles, Columbia River Route

* = All or portions of these segments have potential as cross-country interpretive trails.

OREGON & WASHINGTON

PRIMARY ROUTE OF THE OREGON TRAIL 1841-1848

Primary OREGON TRAIL Route

Related OREGON TRAIL Route

High Potential Historic Site

High Potential Route Segment

Approximate Mileage From Independence, MO

10 0 10 20 30 40 Miles

DESCRIPTION - OREGON AND WASHINGTON

Once across the Snake River from Fort Boise, the emigrants were in the present State of Oregon. They had traveled 1,500 miles from Missouri through the wilderness that later became the States of Kansas, Nebraska, Wyoming, and Idaho. Another 400 miles and a month or more of difficult travel lay between them and the Willamette Valley.

The wagon route is still visible in many areas of undisturbed rangeland and forest in Oregon. Much of the route has been marked where it is near public roads, but many of the markers have disappeared. Only a few short segments have been marked as trails. Many historic sites along the route have not yet been interpreted for the public. Road construction, cultivation, and other developments have erased much of the Oregon Trail and related historic sites in recent years. Positive action by public agencies and citizen groups is needed to preserve remaining visible remnants and sites along the Oregon Trail and to make them available for public recreation. As discussed in the following route description, the primary route partially borders, but does not enter, the State of Washington.

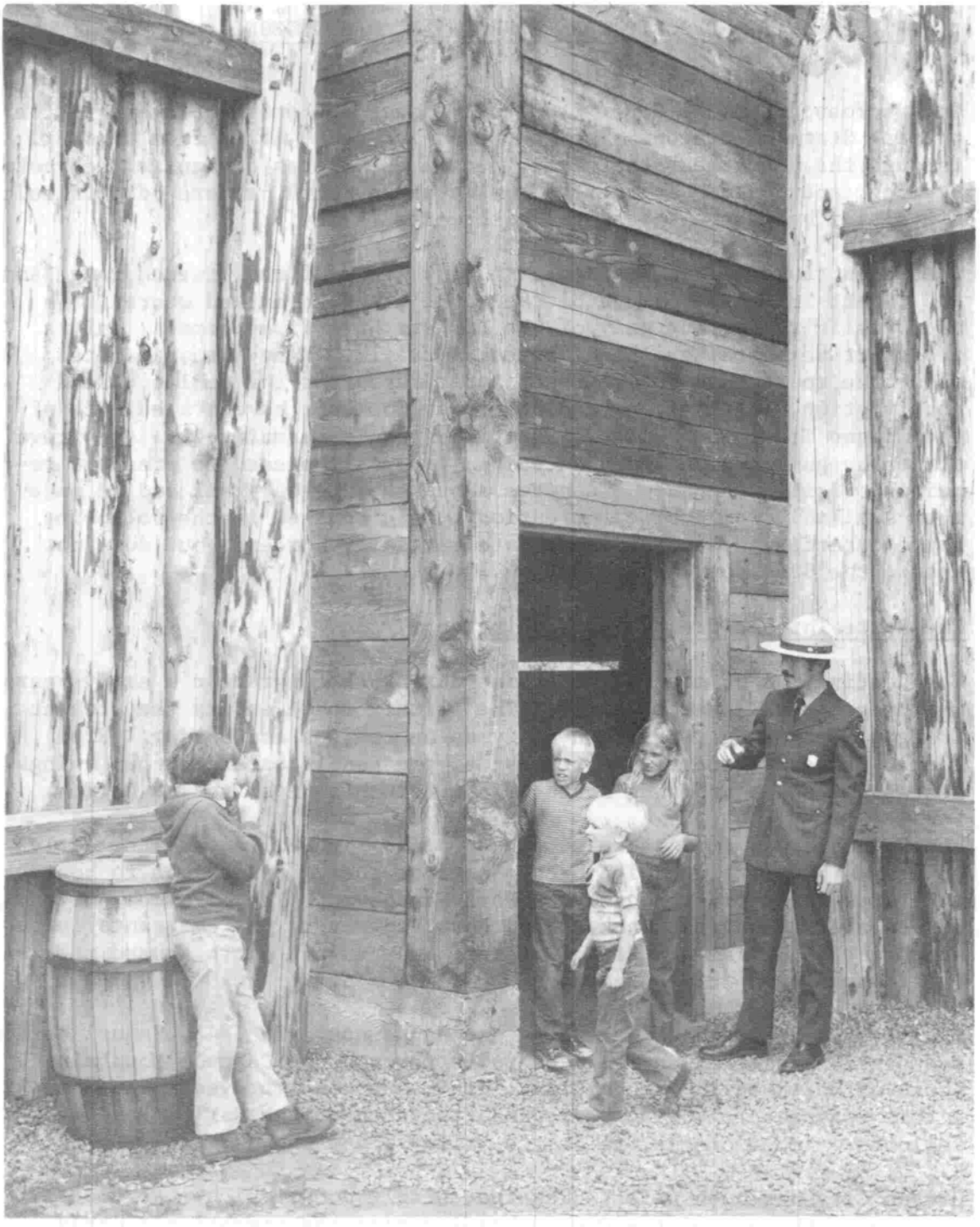
The Route Through Oregon and Washington

The destination of most wagon trains during the migration's early years was Oregon's Willamette Valley. The primary route enters the present State of Oregon near the town of Nyssa on the eastern border. From there, it heads generally northwest to the Pendleton area, then swings westward along benchlands south of the Columbia River to The Dalles.

The Columbia was impassable to wagons below The Dalles, and the early emigrants had little choice but to entrust their possessions to boats and rafts for a river journey to Fort Vancouver. The livestock often were trailed along the bank. From Fort Vancouver, the emigrants turned south up the Willamette River. Later, many turned north toward the Puget Sound area in Washington.

The river trip was both expensive and dangerous. In 1845, Samuel Barlow and others pioneered an overland route through the Cascade Mountains south of Mt. Hood to Oregon City. His route was improved and became a toll road the following year, and from then on the Barlow Road was followed by most of the Willamette Valley bound wagons.

Oregon City has been selected as that single point which most closely represents the end of the Oregon Trail during the migration's early years. A major, staffed interpretive facility is warranted at Oregon City to tell the story of the transition from emigrant to farmer and businessman. It is recognized that a case may be made for designating as terminus other Willamette Valley locations and also The Dalles, which



Youthful visitors to the Fort Vancouver National Historic Site learn of the site's former importance to Oregon Trail emigrants when a Hudson's Bay Company trading post. Emigrants taking the Columbia River route stopped here to rest and restock before turning south in search of new homes in Oregon's Willamette Valley. A major reconstruction project at the site has been undertaken by the National Park Service. Photo: National Park Service.

marked the end of overland travel through 1845. There should be no need for controversy, however, if interpretive programs point out that the Oregon Trail actually had more than one destination, just as it had more than one starting point.

The Columbia River route borders Washington between The Dalles and Fort Vancouver where the river forms the Oregon-Washington boundary. The overland portion of the primary route does not enter Washington. An early route left the primary route near Pendleton for a jog northward to the site of the Whitman Mission in Washington, thence down along the Walla Walla and Columbia Rivers. This was not considered part of the primary route because it received considerably less traffic and much of its location is unknown.

For wagons that followed the Barlow Road to Oregon City, the length of the Oregon Trail route in Oregon is 419 miles. A portion of the South Alternate Route, most of which is in Idaho, adds another 16 miles to the overland route mileage in Oregon. The river route below The Dalles, which for simplicity was considered in this report to extend beyond Fort Vancouver to Oregon City via the Willamette River, measures 113 miles.

The terrain and native vegetation along the route in Oregon and Washington are more varied than in other states. Represented are the arid sagebrush desert along the eastern and central portions, the ponderosa pine forest through the Blue Mountains and east-slope Cascade Mountains, and the dense Douglas fir forest of the wet, west-slope Cascades.

The rugged gorge of the Columbia River provides further variety. Although development has altered its historic appearance, the gorge is still scenic. Two historic sites along the river have high potential for interpreting the Oregon Trail story, and other sites provide additional historic interest. With development of a coordinated interpretive program, the highway through the Columbia River Gorge and the public roads and highways along the Barlow Road could provide a circular interpretive drive.

Of the 435 miles of the primary route in Oregon via the Barlow Road, which includes 16 miles of the South Alternate Route in eastern Oregon, 181 miles in 16 segments were found to have high potential for historic interpretation and/or recreation. Oregon Trail ruts are visible, sometimes for several miles, along all 16 segments. Seven of these segments are roaded, eight are cross-country, and the remaining segment combines both access categories. Cross-country segments in some areas show evidence of current travel by motorized vehicles.

The cross-country segments provide opportunities for interpretive hiking and riding trails. Three of these through the open, park-like timberlands of the Blue Mountains, and one segment in the Cascades, also have high potential for recreation as well as interpretation.

Of the entire Oregon Trail, these four segments totaling 21 miles most nearly resemble the mountainous terrain crossed by existing and potential national scenic trail routes in the western United States.

Route marking, directional signing, and interpretive devices would be needed for the cross-country, high-potential segments on public land. Where these segments traverse forest land, some clearing also would be necessary. New trail construction is generally not needed to provide access, although further investigation may indicate a need in some areas for footpaths to direct public travel away from fragile Oregon Trail remnants.

The high-potential roaded segments warrant attention. As in other states, the opportunity for interpretation and recreation is greater along these segments than for portions of the roaded segments not classified as high-potential. Discontinuous wagon ruts are present along portions of the roaded segments. If access is provided, the motorist or bicyclist could leave his vehicle for short interpretive walks beside the footsteps of the emigrants.

Seventy-seven Oregon Trail-related historic sites have been identified in Oregon and seven in Washington. Of these, 19 in Oregon and two in Washington have high public use potential. Fifteen of the high-potential sites are located along high-potential route segments, and the remaining six are found along other parts of the route. Fourteen high-potential sites are either undeveloped or only partially developed. There is local interest in several additional sites which warrant further study.

High-Potential Route Segments - Oregon and Washington

Keeney Pass Segment (5 miles). The route follows a paved county road through open rangeland and over a low divide named Keeney Pass, formerly Lytle Pass, which offers a panoramic view of the surrounding sagebrush hills. Prominent wagon ruts are visible where not disrupted by road construction, including an exceptional 1/2-mile length at the pass.

This segment has potential for interpretation for motorists and bicyclists which would relate to historic sites in the nearby town of Vale and for short interpretive trails close to the road.

Alkali Springs Segment (17 miles). For all but the final 2 miles of this segment, the route can be followed on a graded dirt road. It is not recommended for low clearance conventional automobiles, however. Wagon ruts are visible intermittently where not obliterated by the road.

Sisley Creek Segment (7 miles). At the little hamlet of Weatherby, the route leaves the Burnt River Canyon to detour around Gold Hill.

A gravel county road follows the route, taking the motorist off the freeway for a quiet 7-mile drive through sagebrush and juniper-covered hills. Oregon Trail ruts are visible close to the road. Peaceful streams, farms, and old buildings add to the general interest.

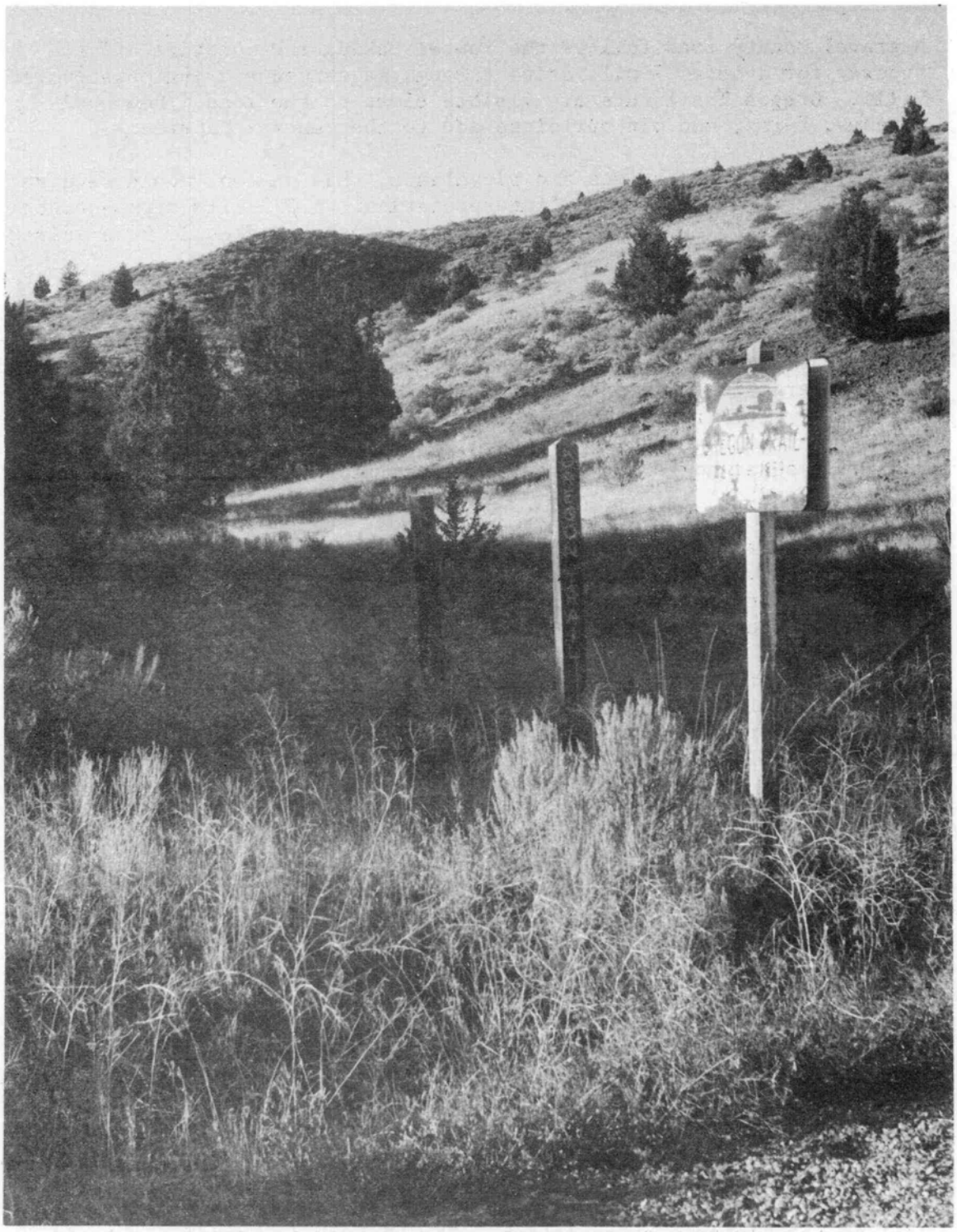
For enjoyment by motorists and bicyclists, this segment would require only directional signing and interpretation. A 0.7-mile cross-country segment of visible Oregon Trail ruts on private land could be acquired and developed as a short, scenic interpretive trail.

White Swan Mine Segment (7 miles). For 7 miles, intermittent wagon ruts can be followed on foot or horseback across steeply rolling, sagebrush-grass rangeland. With adequate public access, this segment could be an interesting interpretive trail. Panoramic views of the surrounding hills, the Burnt River Canyon, and the distant Blue Mountains give the segment high scenic value. Additional interest is provided by abandoned mines and homesteads, although open mine shafts are a potential safety hazard.

Virtue Flat Segment (4 miles). The use of this segment by pickups and off-road vehicles has altered its appearance in places. The route crosses the level sagebrush rangeland and abandoned mines of Virtue Flat and descends Flagstaff Hill to the Baker Valley. The segment has potential as an interpretive trail with views of intermittent wagon ruts and scenic vistas of the Baker Valley and Blue Mountains. The Virtue Flat Mining District, comprising 25,600 acres and including this Oregon Trail segment, has been nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.

Ladd Hill Segment (3 miles). The highway descends to the Grande Ronde Valley via steep, narrow Ladd Canyon in a curve away from the Oregon Trail. A 3-mile, cross-country segment of the route traverses open rangeland surrounded by forest, then makes a direct descent of Ladd Hill. A trail along this segment would be scenic as well as historically interesting. The beginning of the Ladd Hill descent affords one of the finest views along the Oregon Trail route. From here, one may gaze across the verdant Grande Ronde Valley to the Blue Mountains, a sight which many emigrants found worth noting.

LaGrande Segment (7 miles). Prominent wagon ruts climb steeply through ponderosa pine forest, leading into the difficult but beautiful Blue Mountains. Once on top, the route levels out to traverse natural sagebrush-grass parks and open forest on a rolling benchland, then descends to cross the Grande Ronde River. The segment is scenic and generally removed from civilization, giving it high potential for recreation as well as for historic appreciation. The highway is beyond sight and sound in the canyon below. The terrain in general appears much as it did to the emigrants, although a 1973 forest fire has temporarily altered the appearance along the eastern end of the segment. With



Sisley Creek Segment, Oregon. A gravel county road takes the motorist off the freeway for a quiet 7-mile drive through sagebrush and juniper-covered hills. Oregon Trail ruts are visible close to the road. Additional signing and historic interpretation would add to the enjoyment of motorists and bicyclists examining this segment.

provision of public access, interpretation, and directional signing, this segment could be an enjoyable hiking and horseback trail beside prominent wagon ruts.

Hilgard Junction Segment (10 miles). This segment traverses rolling terrain covered by coniferous forest and grassy parks, similar in a appearance to the *LaGrande Segment*. Environmental intrusions are more frequent along this segment as the route in places is within sight and sound of the freeway, and logging operations are evident on private land along the western 2 miles. The segment could be developed as a scenic interpretive trail next to intermittently visible traces of the Oregon Trail. Forest Service management plans recognize the segment as a fragile historic area requiring protection from motorized vehicles.

Deadman's Pass Segment (6 miles). The route here closely follows a section of U. S. Highway 30 bypassed by Interstate 80-N. The Oregon Trail is visible intermittently next to the highway right-of-way. With a minimal expenditure for interpretation and directional signing, the segment would provide a pleasant interpretive trip through open ponderosa pine forest.

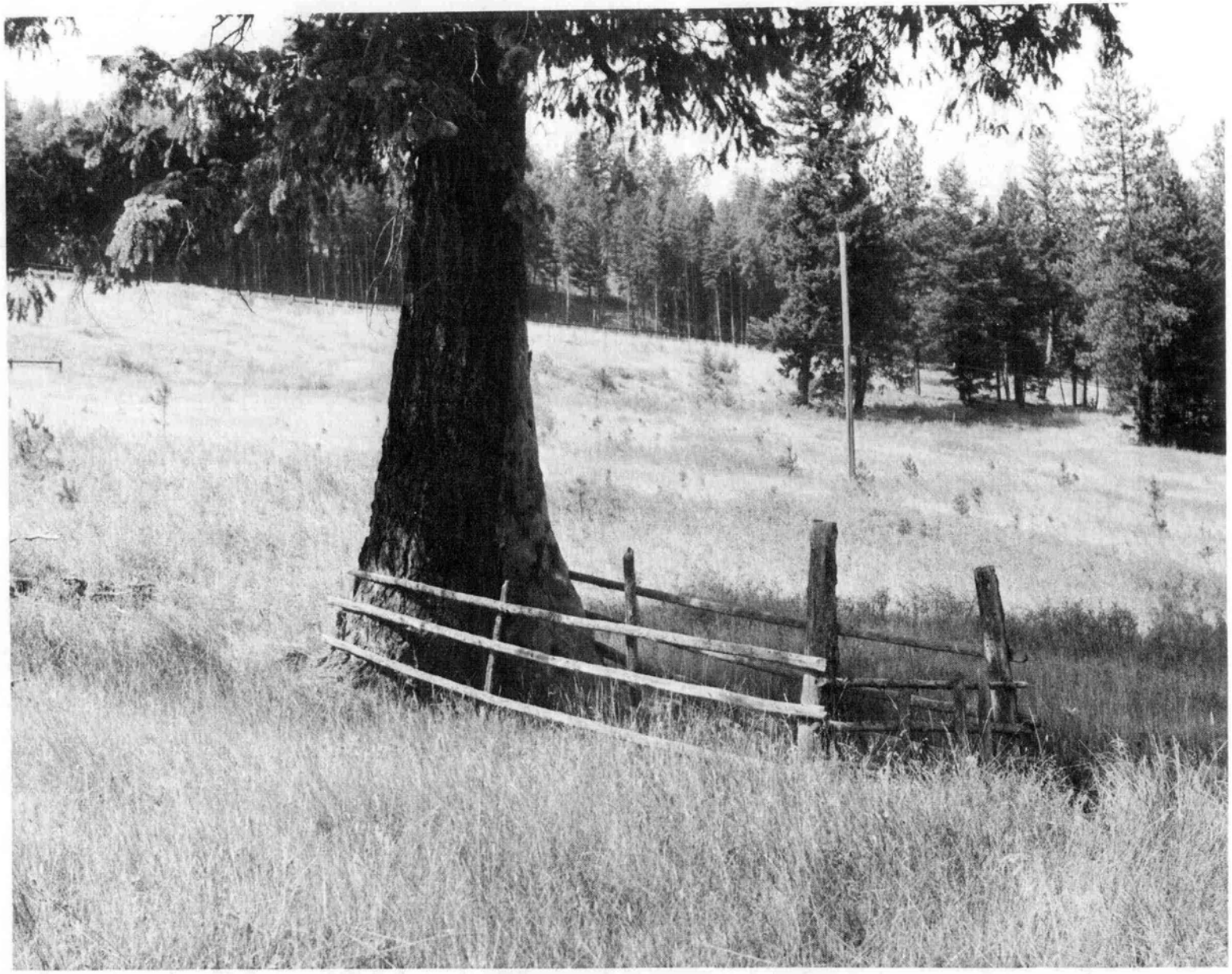
Cayuse Segment (5 miles). During the early years of the migration, wagon trains descended from the Blue Mountains down a long, grassy ridge sloping to the bottomland along the Umatilla River. Wagon ruts are still visible along much of the descent, although erased at the upper end by pipeline construction and at the lower end by cultivation.

This segment could be developed as a scenic interpretive trail, affording sweeping views of nearby foothill ridges and distant plains. However, the segment is entirely within the Umatilla Indian Reservation which is closed to the public.

Echo West Segment (9 miles). The terrain here is arid, generally treeless, benchland. Recent large-scale sprinkler irrigation has eliminated much of the Oregon Trail. Although the scenic value is not high, this segment could be developed as an interpretive trail if remaining wagon ruts are preserved.

Boardman Bombing Range Segment (12 miles). Prominent ruts are nearly continuous, protected to date from cultivation by use of the area as a practice bombing range. Development of irrigation farming is now underway within half of the area, and the remainder is being considered for nuclear power sites and agricultural use (see additional discussion in the sub-section entitled "Land Use and Its Effect").

This segment leads cross-country for the most part, in places within sight of a gravel road paralleling the southern boundary of the bombing range. The emigrants disliked this part of the trail for its dust, heat, and scarcity of water. A modern follower of the route would find



Hilgard Junction Segment, Oregon. There is high potential here for a 10-mile hiking and riding trail through a portion of the picturesque Blue Mountains, largely on National Forest Land. The route, in many places still visible, passes through this grassy meadow used by the emigrants as a campground.

an interpretive foot trail along the segment a very educational experience. The trail remnants and historic sites have high potential for interpretation, but development plans should consider protection from vandalism at these isolated sites.

Deschutes River Segment (15 miles). Once safely across the Deschutes, the emigrant wagons turned uphill to traverse hills a few miles south of the Columbia. Ruts made during the ascent are still visible. The route can largely be followed by automobile on a graded county road along this segment and affords spectacular views of the Deschutes and Columbia River valleys. The nearby site of Celilo Falls on the Columbia, important to Indians for salmon fishing before construction of The Dalles Dam caused it to be inundated, provides opportunities for interpretation.

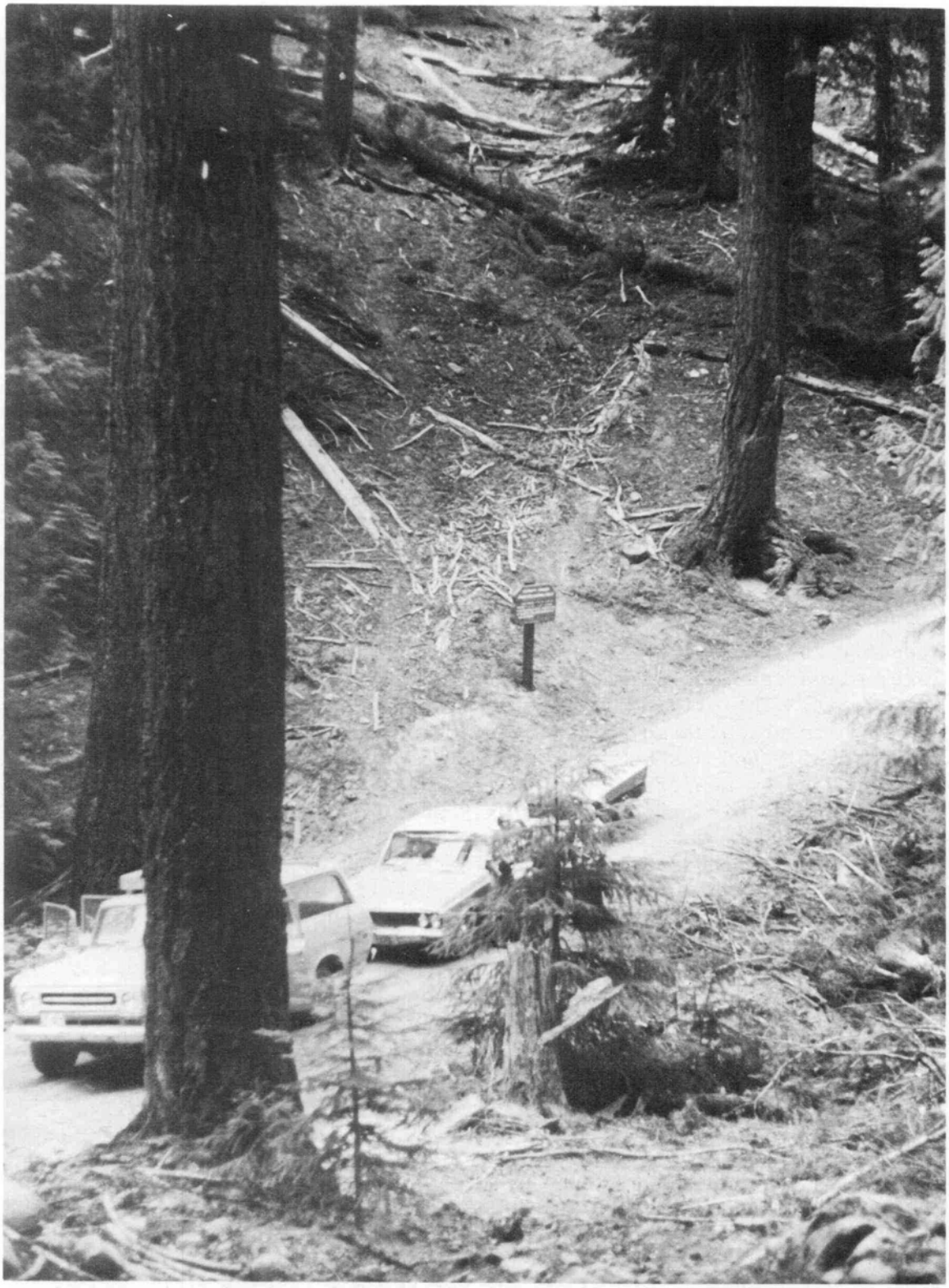
East Barlow Road Segment (21 miles). This is the first of three high-potential segments along the Barlow Road, the terminal overland portion of the Oregon Trail after its opening as a toll road in 1846. The route along the segment is followed closely by a graded dirt Forest Service road, and is accessible by automobile during good weather. It climbs steadily toward Barlow Pass, passing through open ponderosa pine at the lower elevations and dense Douglas fir, true fir, and hemlock toward the summit. The original Barlow Road is still visible in a few locations where not altered by later road construction. The road is open to the public and has been marked by wooden posts. Group treks by bus and car, led by members of local historical societies, have become popular along this and other Barlow Road segments.

National Forest lands along this segment are also important for recreation. Nearby campgrounds serve as takeoff points for hunting, fishing, hiking, and backpacking. The Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail intersects the Barlow Road at Barlow Pass.

The segment needs additional route marking and interpretive development at historic sites. Further investigation may reveal portions of the original Barlow Road that could be developed as short interpretive trails. A proposed Bureau of Reclamation impoundment project would flood a portion of the route along the White River.

Barlow Pass Segment (1 mile). A cross-country segment of the Barlow Road below Barlow Pass has been brushed out by the Forest Service as a hiking trail. The trail is a good example of the potential afforded by forested, cross-country portions of the Barlow Road. It is a popular, easy walk for groups taking guided treks along this part of the Oregon Trail. Additional interpretive and directional signing along the segment would increase its recreation value.

West Barlow Road Segment (52 miles). The first 30 miles of this segment follow narrow, forested mountain valleys generally close to U. S.



East Barlow Road Segment, Oregon. A graded dirt Forest Service road follows the Barlow Road (terminal overland portion of the Oregon Trail) for 21 miles, ascending the eastern slopes of the Cascade Mountains. A few traces of the Barlow Road are still visible as shown here (swath beyond sign), providing opportunities for short interpretive trails and additional interpretive displays.

Barlow Pass Segment, Oregon. A 1-mile, cross-country segment of the Barlow Road below Barlow Pass has been brushed out by the Forest Service as a hiking trail. The trail has potential for additional interpretive and directional signing, and is a good example of the potential afforded by cross-country portions of the Barlow Road.

Highway 26. The remainder crosses rolling farms and woodland, generally near public roads. Recreation housing development, highway construction, and other changes in land use along the mountainous eastern part of the segment are discussed in the subsection entitled "Land Use and Its Effect."

Because of its mountainous setting and nearness to the Portland area, public land along the segment is important for recreation. Developments include a major winter sports area at Timberline Lodge on Mt. Hood and other ski facilities. Mt. Hood's alpine terrain also attracts mountain climbers and backpackers, and the mountain's north and west slopes are a designated wilderness area. Campgrounds and picnic facilities are scattered throughout the area.

A bridle trail roughly parallels part of the Barlow Road, intersecting it in a few locations. A tollgate site near the western end of the road has been reconstructed and landscaped jointly by the Forest Service and garden clubs. The Bureau of Land Management has developed a hiking trail at its Wildwood Recreation Site, along what is believed to have been a wagon road which connected with the Barlow Road.

Additional preservation and interpretive developments are needed at historic sites along the segment. At Laurel Hill, considered to be the worst descent on the Oregon Trail, an interpretive center would vividly convey the anguish experienced in negotiating this formidable "chute" with all of one's worldly possessions. Summit Meadow is a complex of historic sites warranting protection and interpretation and also affording outstanding views of Mt. Hood. Additional remnants of the Barlow Road having trail potential may be discovered upon further investigation.

The segment ends at Oregon City, the symbolic end of the Oregon Trail after extension of the overland route from The Dalles in 1846 by the opening of the Barlow Road. A staffed interpretive facility at Oregon City would be a fitting destination for modern day followers of the Oregon Trail.

Public Agencies - Oregon and Washington

The National Park Service administers staffed interpretive centers at two high-potential sites in Washington that are significant to the Oregon Trail, as well as to other aspects of Northwest history: Fort Vancouver and Whitman Mission National Historic sites. A major reconstruction project has been undertaken at Fort Vancouver. At Whitman Mission, interpretive exhibits are supplemented by a popular living history program. Involvement in Oregon Trail activities by other public agencies in Washington has been minimal, as public use is concentrated at the two Federal sites. Such involvement could increase, however, if further study indicates a potential for public use exists

West Barlow Road Segment, Oregon. Although it was all downhill after Barlow Pass, the emigrants' problems were not over. Laurel Hill, pictured here, was considered the worst descent on the Oregon Trail. An interpretive center here would vividly convey the anguish experienced in negotiating this formidable "chute" with all of one's worldly possessions.

in the State for other Oregon Trail sites or for other historic routes related to the Oregon Trail.

In Oregon, excluding the Columbia River route, 154 miles (35 percent) of the Oregon Trail route are on publicly owned lands and 281 miles (65 percent) are privately owned.

The Bureau of Land Management administers land along 22 miles of the route in Oregon. Although previously mapped, the route's location through Oregon has not been documented and the location of some stretches is questionable. The Bureau researched portions of the route during the study, using original survey plats, aerial photographs, emigrant diaries, visible remnants, and other evidence. The Oregon Trail route is being incorporated into the Bureau's management maps and plans in Oregon.

The Forest Service has a direct interest in the Oregon Trail in Oregon. Thirty-eight miles of the route cross two national forests, the Wallowa-Whitman and the Mt. Hood. The portion of the route through the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, in the Blue Mountains, remains mostly undeveloped as a recreation resource. Management plans for the portion of the Barlow Road, the terminal overland portion of the Oregon Trail, through the Mt. Hood National Forest were prepared prior to this study. The Forest Service also has provided directional and interpretive signs, has cleared a 1-mile cross-country segment as a public hiking and horseback trail, and has published a public information brochure on the Barlow Road.

The Oregon Historical Society conducts various programs and studies related to the Oregon Trail, including provision of information and coordination with other public agencies, local historic societies, and individuals. The Society's library contains one of the largest existing collections of emigrant diaries and other written information related to the migration. Cooperation with local historical societies in route marking and preservation efforts is a major Oregon Trail-related function. The Society was a major participant in the study.

The Oregon State Highway Division and its Parks and Recreation Branch have been active in various route mapping, marking, and interpretive efforts related to the Oregon Trail. Between 1956 and 1959, the route's location was established by highway engineers using old surveys and emigrant diaries. Markers were placed where the route paralleled and intersected roads and highways. A booklet of strip maps illustrating the route of the trail through Oregon was published for public distribution. In 1970, a field reconnaissance was made which led to recommendations for interpretation, marking, public information, and other actions. Low-level aerial photography was conducted along the entire route in Oregon in 1971, utilizing matching funds authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The Highway Division, with

The Barlow Road, terminal overland segment of the Oregon Trail, ended on the bank of the Willamette River at Oregon City. Although many travelers sought other destinations, Oregon City has been selected as the symbolic end of the trail. A staffed interpretive facility here, to tell the story of the transition from emigrant to farmer and businessman, would be a fitting goal to modern-day followers of the Oregon Trail. Contributed by Clackamas County Historical Society.

assistance from the Oregon Historical Society, has erected massive wooden interpretive signs at various locations along the Oregon Trail route.

The Superintendent of the Parks and Recreation Branch has been designated by the Governor as State Historic Preservation Officer under the National Historic Preservation Act. Recently, the Branch has begun an innovative program of Oregon Trail interpretive development at highway safety rest areas and State parks along or near the trail route. Funding for facilities at highway safety rest areas will be provided in part by the Highway Trust Fund. The program has provided walk-in display shelters and other interpretive facilities.

Indian Lands - Oregon

The Oregon Trail route crosses 14 miles of Indian lands on the Umatilla Reservation. Although much of the route on the reservation has been lost through cultivation, visible traces remain along a 5-mile unplowed segment having high potential for public use (Cayuse Segment). Incorporation of the Oregon Trail in reservation land use planning is being considered by the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation. The presence of the Oregon Trail and related historic sites on the reservation could provide the Tribes an opportunity to present their viewpoint on the impact of the westward migration on Indian culture.

Land Use and Its Effect - Oregon and Washington

The terrain along approximately 153 miles of the route in Oregon is undeveloped rangeland used for domestic livestock grazing. For the most part, the Oregon Trail is still visible except where heavy grazing has led to accelerated erosion or where eliminated by construction of roads and highways, powerlines, and pipelines. Part of the rangeland traversed by the route is in the public domain, under the administration of the Bureau of Land Management.

Excluding the Columbia River route, approximately 180 miles (41 percent) of the Oregon Trail route traverses cultivated farmland in Oregon.[1/] Most of the cropland along the route in the eastern part of the State is irrigated. From the Pendleton area to The Dalles, and south of The Dalles along the Barlow Road to Tygh Valley, the route crosses dryland wheat fields. Farming activity, road construction, and other developments have combined with natural erosion to erase Oregon Trail remnants through most cropland areas.

1/ Source: Atlas of the Pacific Northwest, 1968, Richard M. Highsmith and Jon M. Leverenz, Oregon State University Press.

Recently, considerable rangeland and a number of wheat fields along the Oregon Trail route on arid benchlands south of the Columbia River between Pendleton and The Dalles have been brought under irrigation. Information on the extent of this recent irrigation was not readily available, so the figures given here may underestimate Oregon Trail route mileage through farmland. Except for the Boardman Bombing Range, the wagon ruts remaining on this benchland largely are on land too steep or rough for cultivation.

The land along 12 miles of the route across the Boardman Bombing Range remains in an essentially natural condition and wagon ruts are visible for nearly the entire distance. The western half of the area (50,000 acres) is now under lease by the State to the Boeing Company and is no longer used for bombing practice. As part of a diversification effort, Boeing has begun a long-range program to bring much of its land in the Boardman area under irrigated farming. The program eventually could affect the Oregon Trail, although irrigation development now planned will be north of the route. New agricultural activity will bring additional people into this area of rather limited recreation resources. The Boeing Company could indirectly benefit its own program and serve the public interest by preserving the historical appearance of land along its portion of the Oregon Trail for public use.

The eastern half of the Boardman Bombing Range (48,000 acres) is administered as a practice range by the Department of the Navy. The land is pockmarked in places by bomb craters, but otherwise retains a natural appearance. Considerable interest has been expressed in the area for use as possible nuclear power plant sites with associated irrigation development using water from the power plant cooling ponds. Such development could adversely affect Oregon Trail remnants. The route here, as on the adjoining Boeing land, has high public use potential and is worthy of nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

Timber harvesting is a major land use along approximately 90 miles of the route through the Blue Mountains and the Cascade Range--mileage excludes the Columbia River Route. Much of the forest land crossed by the Oregon Trail route is under multiple-use management by the U. S. Forest Service. In addition to logging, land uses include public recreation, livestock grazing, production of domestic water, and wildlife habitat. Grazing is most important on grasslands in the open, park-like forest of the Blue Mountains. Recreation use is heaviest on the west slope of the Cascades, near the Portland metropolitan area. Although road construction and other activities associated with forest utilization have erased part of the Oregon Trail through forested lands, much of the route is still visible.

The western end of the Barlow Road lies in a scenic, forested mountain valley on the outskirts of the Portland metropolitan area. The valley is important as a day-use recreation area and transportation corridor,

and demand for recreational housing development is placing increased pressure on land use. Highway construction and other developments have obliterated much of the Barlow Road and only a few visible remnants remain. An interagency planning group involving Federal, State, and local agencies has produced a report entitled, Preliminary Plan - Mt. Hood Community. The report gives information on the Barlow Road and several associated historic sites, and contains recommendations for the preservation of remaining remnants.

The Oregon Trail route via the Barlow Road, excluding the Columbia River route, passes through 16 cities and towns in Oregon. The route within these developed areas, for the most part no longer visible, totals about 12 miles.

The route via the Columbia River, used mostly before opening of the Barlow Road, has changed considerably since early Oregon Trail days. The Cascades of the Columbia, a fearsome array of rapids requiring a 3-mile portage, were bypassed by a series of locks built a century ago. Now the rapids lie beneath the impounded waters of Bonneville Dam and the river has become a major navigational waterway.

Development also has changed the river's banks, particularly along Interstate 80-N on the Oregon side. A drive through the Columbia Gorge is still very scenic, however, especially by way of old U. S. Route 30. This serpentine road follows a precarious route along the steeply sloping south wall of the gorge, affording views of natural landmarks noted by the emigrants. The lower portion of the river route, from Fort Vancouver up the Willamette River to Oregon City, passes through the Portland metropolitan area where it has become a major industrial waterway. The Willamette recently has undergone massive pollution control, and is the subject of a large-scale, linear park and recreation program known as the Willamette Greenway Project.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. DESIGNATION AND ESTABLISHMENT

Findings: The Oregon Trail does not qualify for designation as a National Scenic Trail because the historic route does not follow a continuous, scenic corridor suitable for hiking and riding. Most of the original trail has been lost to farming, road construction, and other activities. The route was utilitarian in nature and, while much of the landscape it traverses is interesting, the type of scenic appeal common to National Scenic Trails is often lacking.

The Oregon Trail, however, unquestionably qualifies for national commemoration because of its historic importance. It is one of the most significant historic routes in the United States and was a major determinant in the settlement of the American Northwest. In addition to its commemorative value, remnants of the trail and historic sites associated with it comprise a unique and nationally significant resource for public recreation in the form of historic appreciation and understanding. Opportunities for other leisure activities are provided where the route is scenic or near water, parks, and other recreation areas.

There is strong public interest in commemorating the Oregon Trail and in preserving trail remnants and historic sites for public use. An estimated 840 people attended public meetings held during the study. This was a significant show of concern, considering that the study was noncontroversial and the meetings were held in midwinter during a severe gasoline shortage. Press and television coverage before and after the meetings was both widespread and favorable.

Much of the public interest now is found in State and local historical societies along the route, whose members often are descendants of Oregon Trail emigrants. Memberships in these societies number in the thousands and are growing. Public interest is expected to broaden if action is taken to make the Oregon Trail's potential for outdoor recreation better known and more available.

In the absence of Federal legislation protecting the Oregon Trail, historic remnants and artifacts are being destroyed through adverse development and vandalism. Preservation and interpretive development now are left to the individual States, public agencies, and historical societies, with little or no overall coordination or direction. Knowledge of the Oregon Trail's potential for public recreation use, and interest in realizing its potential, varies among the agencies having jurisdiction along the route.

The primary value of the Oregon Trail for recreation lies in the remaining trail remnants and in the historic sites and landmarks along

the route. If preserved and interpreted for the public, these provide a way of reliving the experiences of those who took part in the great westward migration. Of particular value are those historic sites and visible trail segments that largely retain their historic appearance, are scenic, or are near population centers.

Forty-eight route segments totaling 1,083 miles were found to have high potential for public use. Of these, 14 are close to or overlain by roads and highways, 15 are cross-country, and the remaining 19 contain both roaded and cross-country access categories.

Of the 34 high-potential segments or partial segments classified as cross-country, 30 warrant establishment as interpretive trails that would total approximately 324 miles. Wagon ruts are visible along all but one of these segments, and are continuous in some areas for several miles. The historic appearance of some of the ruts has been altered by motorized use, development, and other factors. A complete inventory of essentially unaltered trail remnants was not done for this study and will require further investigation. The route segments having potential as cross-country interpretive trails remain a largely untapped recreation resource, as only four short trails have been established to date.

Travel by motorized vehicle or bicycle is the most popular means of retracing long portions of the approximate route of the Oregon Trail. Such travel would be facilitated by interpretive signing where appropriate along the public roads and highways most closely following the historic route. This would include signing at appropriate intervals with a standard marker, interpretation at historic sites, and access to interpretive trails. Parks, streams, reservoirs, and other recreational areas along the route would provide additional leisure activities and would give Oregon Trail followers places to picnic and camp. Of great value are the 33 route segments or partial segments along roads or highways, totaling 758 miles, which were classified as high-potential. These segments provide more opportunities for historic interpretation and recreation than other portions of the route.

Interpretation and public use along the freeway, roaded, and cross-country trail segments would be concentrated at the 480 historic sites inventoried along the route, particularly at 115 sites that have high potential for public use. To be meaningful to the public, historic sites must be given appropriate interpretive development. Sixty percent of the high-potential sites today are either undeveloped or only partially developed.

An information brochure distributed for public meetings held in conjunction with the study presented various alternatives for action, including national designation of the Oregon Trail route. The brochure contained a tear-out sheet to facilitate public comment. Nearly 200 persons gave their written opinions on the alternatives, either through completion of the tear-out sheet or in written statements or letters. Of these,

98 percent were in favor of establishing a system of national historic trail routes and designating the Oregon Trail as a component of that system. The references to public opinion in this section refer to the results of this survey.

Recommendations: Federal legislation should be enacted to commemorate the entire route of the Oregon Trail, along its historic alignment, by designation as the Oregon National Historic Trail.

The legislation should provide authority for: (a) establishment by administrative action of suitable cross-country segments of the Oregon National Historic Trail as public interpretive trails; (b) appropriate marking of public roads and highways approximating the route; and (c) protective measures and other actions recommended herein as appropriate.

The Oregon National Historic Trail would be a component of the National Trails System, within the new proposed category of National Historic Trails (Appendix D). While the entire actual historic route would be commemorated for its historic significance by the proposed designation, the public would be directed only to route segments established as public interpretive trails, to marked highways, and to those historic sites which are developed for public use.

2. ADMINISTRATION AND PLANNING (Public Lands)

Findings: Approximately 47 percent of the Oregon Trail route is on public land. The Bureau of Land Management currently manages 19 percent of the route (403 miles), all in Wyoming, Idaho, and Oregon. The Forest Service has jurisdiction over 2 percent of the total route (38 miles), all in Oregon. Other Federal agencies manage 6 percent of the route (119 miles). Four major historic sites related to the Oregon Trail, which include 4 miles of the route, have been developed and are administered by the National Park Service. The remainder of the publicly owned portion, 20 percent or 417 miles, is administered by the States or their political subdivision. Of the latter category, the majority is within public road rights-of-way.

There has been considerable loss of Oregon Trail remnants on public lands from road construction, pipelines, and other development. However, many miles of the original trail are still visible. Where these visible segments lead cross-country, they could provide interest to public trail users. Where near roads, they provide opportunities for interpretation to motorists.

The trail's recreation potential is outstanding on some undeveloped rangelands under Bureau of Land Management administration. While the Forest Service portion of the route is shorter, it is in scenic, forested terrain with high recreation potential.

Many of the historic sites associated with the Oregon Trail on public lands have been preserved and interpreted by various public agencies and citizen groups. Route marking programs have been carried out in several states, but with uncoordinated marker design and placement standards. Public agencies have rarely recognized the route itself as a public recreation resource, however, and very few cross-country segments have been developed as public trails.

The Bureau of Land Management has done considerable mapping of the Oregon Trail and other historic routes on lands in the public domain. Route mapping began before this study and has accelerated during the study. Other actions being taken by the Bureau include incorporating historic routes into area management plans, developing management policy guidelines, and constructing wayside interpretive exhibits. The Forest Service prepared a management plan for part of the Oregon Trail route on national forest land near the Barlow Road prior to this study. The National Park Service has carried out intensive development and reconstruction at its four Oregon Trail sites, and additional work is underway. The Oregon Parks and Recreation Branch recently began an ambitious interpretive program at highway rest areas and State parks along the Oregon Trail route, using monies from the Highway Trust Fund. Other State and local agencies along the route are engaged in various site marking, interpretive, and public information programs.

The National Register of Historic Places, as published in the Federal Register of February 1, 1977, listed numerous historic sites related to the Oregon Trail. Some public agencies, including the Bureau of Land Management, have begun procedures for nominating additional sites and trail remnants for inclusion in the Register.

Administration and planning along the Oregon Trail route by a single Federal agency would assure maximum uniformity but would probably be impractical. There is, however, a need for coordination among the many agencies and organizations directly concerned with the trail route. The Secretary of the Interior could provide such coordination and, in consultation with others, develop a plan for the cooperative management and protection of the trail.

Advisory groups may be needed within some states to encourage coordination of local historical society and other citizen group activities, and to act as liaison between these groups and public agencies. Strong interest exists in some local historical societies for continued Oregon Trail research, preservation, marking, and interpretation. Such groups, if coordinated or guided by state advisory councils, could be effective in working with private landowners to encourage preservation, in trail marking programs, and in other activities. The need for state advisory councils would depend on the degree of citizen interest within the State and the potential for citizen action programs.

Public opinion on alternatives for planning and administration presented in the information brochure was as follows: No change--6 percent; planning and administration by a single Federal agency in consultation with a central advisory council--14 percent; continued administration by individual agencies with planning coordination by a national advisory council--31 percent; and continued administration by individual agencies with planning coordination by state advisory councils--49 percent.

Recommendations: The Secretary of the Interior should be assigned responsibility for overall coordination of matters pertaining to the Oregon National Historic Trail. To obtain guidance in preparing a plan for the management and protection of the trail, the Secretary should consult with concerned Federal agencies, State Historic Preservation Officers, and other State, local, and private representatives, and should be authorized to assist in implementing the recommendations of this report as appropriate. The Secretary should encourage the creation of State advisory councils where needed and should consult with such councils.

The Secretary should develop guidelines, and Federal management agencies should develop management policies and master plans within these guidelines, for the establishment, preservation, development, and administration of cross-country trail segments, and related historic sites within 3 years of enacting Federal legislation. Planning should be coordinated with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, with appropriate State Historic Preservation Officers, State Liaison Officers for the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and with State Oregon Trail advisory councils if present. Emphasis in planning should be given to those route segments and historic sites with high potential for public use. The Secretary should encourage the completion of Oregon Trail management policy and master plans on State and public subdivision lands. Master planning should include an inventory of visible Oregon Trail remnants, with identification of remnants that essentially retain their historic appearance as well as those that have been altered.

Management of Oregon National Historic Trail segments and historic sites on public land and highway marking should be the responsibility of those public agencies having jurisdiction over the lands, roads, or highways involved.

The requirements of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and Executive Order 11593 should be met by all public agencies in implementing recommendations of this report. Documentation of compliance should be included in final planning documents and in any environmental assessments performed under the National Environmental Policy Act. Nominations should be completed for all Oregon Trail segments, sites, and landmarks eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

3. ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT

Findings: Decisions as to where and how public funds are to be spent for Oregon Trail acquisition and development are now made according to individual agency policies, with no overall direction. The priority given to Oregon Trail acquisition and development varies from agency to agency, and from state to state. Funding sources often place limitations on where and how funds can be spent. The Oregon Trail must compete for funds with other projects, and trail remnants and associated sites may be lost when other projects are given higher priority.

Of the 1,083 route miles and 115 historic sites identified as having high potential for public use, 232 route miles and 36 historic sites now in private ownership warrant acquisition to provide protection and public use. Most urgent is acquisition--through fee simple purchase, easement, donation, or exchange--of those route segments and sites threatened by adverse development, located in scenic areas, and in or near urban areas.

Acquisition of easements for public access and preservation of historic remnants and appearance is more desirable in many cases than acquisition in fee simple. This would allow continued land uses compatible with historic preservation and recreation, and the need for fencing rangeland along the route would be minimized. Many private landowners along the route have expressed opposition to public access because of possible vandalism and other problems on adjacent private land. The same landowners, however, are often sympathetic to preservation of Oregon Trail remnants. In such cases, acquisition of easements for preservation but excluding public access may be appropriate to protect the resource until public access can be negotiated.

Some Oregon Trail areas to be considered for acquisition are located on privately owned in-holdings within Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service management unit boundaries. The Federal agency having jurisdiction over adjacent land is the most logical one to acquire such areas for protection and interpretive development, through land exchange or donation where possible and otherwise through purchase. Outside Federal management boundaries, acquisition and development generally are most appropriately the responsibility of states or their political subdivisions.

Interpretive development and informational signing of the Oregon Trail are essential to its full understanding and use by the public. Such development is needed along all route segments having potential as cross-country interpretive trails and along certain highway segments. Interpretive signs and displays are needed at 71 high-potential historic sites which are either undeveloped or only partially developed. During master planning, some sites may be found to warrant protective development or recreation facilities as well. Sites and trail segments

most in need of development are those in or near urban areas and those which can provide a variety of recreation opportunities.

Large development projects strongly supported by public agencies and citizen groups include staffed interpretive facilities at the symbolic beginning and end of the primary Oregon Trail route (Independence, Missouri, and Oregon City, Oregon), reconstruction of Fort Boise in Idaho, and staffed interpretive facilities in Kansas (Pottawatomie segment) and Wyoming (Independence Rock).

Trail construction is not needed along most cross-country segments for public access, as these segments are in open terrain and may be traveled by foot or horseback. Such travel provides the ultimate in recapturing the emigrant experience, but where visible trail remnants are present, excessive foot or horse travel can alter the historic appearance of the remnants.

Where public travel along visible wagon ruts is likely to alter their historic appearance, it may be necessary to divert public travel along trails constructed adjacent to the ruts. An inventory of route segments requiring protective trail construction was not made during this study and will be a necessary part of master planning.

Vandalism and accidental damage have been common along the Oregon Trail route. Many route segments and historic sites have escaped such damage because they are unmarked and unknown to the public. This study can be expected to generate increased public interest in the Oregon Trail. Public damage, therefore, is a major consideration in planning the design and placement of signs, markers, and interpretive facilities.

The level of acquisition and development needs indicated in this study is based on current public interest and that expected in the near future. Public interest may increase more than anticipated, resulting in greater acquisition and development needs. Additional route segments and historic sites may be found after this study to possess high potential for public use and, therefore, to warrant consideration for acquisition or development.

Federal funding sources available to States and their political subdivisions for Oregon Trail acquisition and development include the Land and Water Conservation Fund, grants authorized by the Historic Preservation Act of 1966, and the Highway Trust Fund. The Land and Water Conservation Fund may be used to acquire route segments with trail potential and historic sites with recreation value. The Fund cannot be used to acquire sites primarily for historic preservation, to construct elaborate interpretive facilities, or for historic reconstruction. Simple interpretive facilities in a multiuse recreation area may be developed, however. While historic preservation grants do not contain such restrictions, the funding level in this program

is relatively low and most grants are used for historic structures. Highway Trust Fund monies may be used for interpretive facilities and signs along federally funded highways.

Public opinion on the funding priorities for Oregon Trail acquisition and development was: no change in present funding patterns—8 percent; and establishment of acquisition and development priorities for route segments and historic sites having high potential for public use—92 percent.

Recommendations: The highest priority for Federal funding[1/] of Oregon Trail projects should be to acquire, for protection and public use, those cross-country route segments and historic sites with high potential for public use which are endangered by incompatible development, which are in or near urban areas, and which can provide for a variety of recreation experiences. Whenever possible, acquisition should be through land exchange, donation, or purchase of easements.

Development priority should be accorded: (a) providing historic interpretation facilities and recreation opportunities for those high-potential cross-country trail segments and historic sites near urban areas and those which can provide a variety of recreation opportunities, and (b) marking roads and highways which are in proximity to the original trail route. All development should be predicated upon the preservation of historic integrity, and should be accompanied by protective development or other protective measures where needed to prevent damage to historic remnants. Development for public use of route segments and historic sites that are vulnerable to damage from such use should be delayed until reasonable protective measures are available.

Except for priority funding discussed above, acquisition and development of high-potential sites and route segments should proceed as the need is indicated by public use of available Oregon Trail areas. Determination of high public use potential for funding purposes should be made by management agencies in consultation with the appropriate State or local advisory council(s) and the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. Determination should not be based on the findings of this study without additional investigation.

4. PRESERVATION ON PRIVATE LANDS

Findings: Approximately 53 percent of the Oregon Trail route crosses private and Indian lands. Farming and other development of these lands have destroyed many visible trail remnants and historic

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1/ Federal funding refers both to direct Federal acquisition and to Federal assistance programs.

sites, and losses are continuing as additional lands are cultivated and developed. Knowledge of the existence and significance of remaining historic remnants, and interest in their preservation, varies among landowners.

Landowners commenting on the study at public meetings typically expressed approval of preservation efforts, but were opposed to public use of the Oregon Trail on private lands. The main reasons given for opposing such use were vandalism and misuse of motorized vehicles on private land. However, the potential may exist in some areas for Oregon Trail-related public recreation on private lands, and warrants investigation.

High-potential route segments and historic sites on private land need to be preserved pending acquisition of easements by public agencies. Members of state and local historical societies can work effectively with landowners to assist in identification of Oregon Trail remnants and sites, and to encourage their preservation. Advisory councils at the state level may be the most appropriate means for encouraging and coordinating such actions by historical societies.

Fifty-one miles of the route are on two Indian reservations, the Fort Hall in Idaho and the Umatilla in Oregon. Visible Oregon Trail remnants and historic sites with high interpretive potential still exist on both. The reservations are closed to the public, however, and historic remnants and sites are largely unmarked and undeveloped. Loss of historic remnants is occurring through cultivation and other development. The presence of the Oregon Trail and related historic sites on Indian lands provides an opportunity for Indian interpretation of the westward settler migration and its impact on Indian life.

Public opinion with respect to preservation action on private land was: no change--3 percent; and encouragement of Oregon Trail preservation on private land by historical societies--97 percent.

Recommendations: State and local historical societies should work with private landowners to identify Oregon Trail remnants and related historic sites on private land, encourage their preservation, and explore opportunities for public recreation use. Oregon Trail advisory councils or similar groups at the state level should coordinate these activities.

Advisory councils or groups should also work with tribal councils of the Fort Hall and Umatilla Indian Reservations, in cooperation with appropriate state agencies, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and state advisory councils, to encourage preservation of Oregon Trail remnants and to explore the possibilities for interpretive development of mutual benefit to Indians and non-Indians.

5. MOTORIZED ACCESS (Public Lands)

Findings: Motorized travel has become well established along some cross-country Oregon Trail segments. Such use in some areas has altered the appearance of prominent wagon ruts.

For the cross-country route segments which contain essentially unaltered trail remnants, motorized travel is incompatible with historic preservation.

Public opinion on the use of motorized vehicles along the Oregon Trail route on public lands was: prohibit motorized access by the public along all visible route segments--24 percent; allow motorized vehicle access along all route segments--5 percent; and prohibit motorized vehicles from unaltered route segments and otherwise leave the decision to the administering agency--71 percent.

Recommendations: Motorized vehicles should be prohibited from designated cross-country segments of the Oregon Trail.

6. ROUTE MARKING AND LOCATION

Findings : The design and placement of existing signs and markers along the Oregon Trail varies among the states, and marking programs generally have not been coordinated. Signs are lacking along much of the actual route and along many of the nearby roads and highways.

Oregon Trail emigrants settled many of the existing cities and towns along the Oregon Trail route. Many of these cities and towns today take pride in being a destination for part of the Oregon Trail migration, and would like to have a distinctive sign recognizing their historic origin.

Public opinion as to the need for route marking was: no change in present uncoordinated programs--4 percent; marking of the actual route and historic sites--7 percent; marking along public roads and highways most closely following the route--18 percent; and marking both the a actual route and nearby public roads--71 percent.

Recommendations: Three distinctive signs or markers should be designed for uniform use and guidelines should be developed for their placement: (1) a simple marker for use along cross-country trail segments, (2) a sign for placement along roads and highways located near to and paralleling the route, and (3) a sign to designate Oregon Trail destination cities and towns.

Placement of markers along the actual route for segments and sites vulnerable to public damage should be delayed until reasonable means are available to protect their historic integrity.

7. PUBLIC INFORMATION

Findings: Information on the Oregon Trail and associated historic sites is presently available from various public agencies and private organizations. There is, however, no central listing of general references and publications available from public agencies. Also, there are no detailed maps available showing the entire route and related historic sites.

Public opinion relative to desired public information on the Oregon Trail was: no change in the present, uncoordinated production of information--2 percent; publication of a summary brochure with references and sources--14 percent; publication of a detailed reference document for sale--17 percent; and a combination of the above three alternatives--67 percent.

Recommendations: Upon addition of the Oregon National Historic Trail to the National Trails System, a brochure should be published for sale at a nominal cost giving general information of interest to those wishing to retrace the Oregon Trail. In addition, a reference book containing maps and background information should also be published for sale.

ALTERNATIVES

The following alternatives were considered:

1. Alternative: No action.

Discussion: Efforts by public agencies and citizen groups to preserve remaining remnants of the Oregon Trail and associated historic sites would continue, but probably would remain uncoordinated and incomplete. Concerned agencies and groups could be expected to interpret nondesignation as a disinterest at the national level. The priority placed by public agencies on Oregon Trail projects could decrease. The loss of historic remnants and artifacts from changes in land use would continue subject to the constraints of the National Preservation Act of 1966, Executive Order 11593, NEPA, and other statutory obligations. Persons wishing to retrace the route could continue to find a lack of adequate maps and no central source of information. Much of the route would remain unmarked and many of the points of interest would continue to lack interpretive development.

2. Alternative: Inclusion in the designated Oregon National Historic Trail of only those segments of the Oregon Trail found to have high potential for public use. Other actions would be carried out as proposed.

Discussion: The Oregon Trail has national historic significance as a continuous route, even though some portions have higher potential for public recreation use than others. Many people wish to retrace the entire route or long portions thereof, although they may concentrate on those segments that are most interesting by virtue of historic integrity, scenic value, occurrence of noteworthy historic events, etc. This alternative could invite pressure for continuous marking and for acquisition or development of individual sites not located along designated route segments.

3. Alternative: Implementation of all actions as proposed, with the addition of a continuous bicycle trail to generally follow the entire Oregon Trail. The bicycle trail would be located so as not to destroy historic remnants or interfere with hiking or horseback riding along visible cross-country segments of the Oregon Trail route on public land.

Discussion: The concept of an east-west, non-motorized trail along the Oregon Trail route was proposed during this study by an organization affiliated with the National Recreation and Park Association. Although the concept merits further investigation, such action was not proposed as a study recommendation because of its high cost. Information on trail use and trends is insufficient at present to predict whether the public would use such a trail sufficiently to justify its expense.

To construct a 6-foot wide surfaced bicycle path along the entire length of the Oregon Trail route would cost an estimated $40,000,000. For estimating cost, it was assumed that such a path would be constructed within the rights-of-way of public roads and highways most closely following the Oregon Trail, thus eliminating the need for acquisition. Location of portions of the bicycle path across private land would, of course, substantially increase its cost.

In practice, public use of such a bicycle path probably could be increased by deviating from the Oregon Trail in places to take advantage of scenic or recreation areas, other public rights-of-way, or to serve bicycle commuters. Such deviations could be done without compromising the historic value of the Oregon Trail if marking and interpretive programs clearly pointed out where the bicycle path followed the Oregon Trail route and where it did not. Further investigation may indicate the practicality of constructing discontinuous bicycle paths along the Oregon Trail route in areas most likely to attract public use. These could be connected at some future time when public interest or need increase sufficiently to justify costs.

A policy question would arise regarding the application of Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966, as amended (P. L. 89-670). If the bicycle path were considered by the Secretary of Transportation to be a recreation or historic facility, it would require his official determination before he approved any federally funded transportation project across the bicycle path, that there are no feasible and prudent alternatives to the crossing, and that the crossing incorporated all measures to minimize harm to the bicycle trail. If considered to be a transportation facility rather than a recreation or historic facility, no such determination would be required.

MAJOR LAND USES

Major land uses along the trail route include agriculture, forests, rangeland, and urban. The following table categorizes land use on lands adjacent to high-potential segments of the Oregon Trail route.

Table 1

MAJOR LAND USES ADJACENT TO HIGH-POTENTIAL SEGMENTS

	Agri-Culture	Range-Land	Forest	Urban	Forest Urban	Rngelnd Forest	Agri. Forest	Agri. Rnglnd	Total
Number of Segments	2	29	5	1	2	2	3	4	48
Segment Miles	208	436	47	15	17	90	72	198	1,083

Along the high-potential route segments which represent about one-half of the route miles, rangeland is the dominant use (40 percent) followed by agriculture (18 percent) and combinations of the various land uses.

LAND OWNERSHIP

Table 2 summarizes land ownership along the Oregon Trail route by state, for the entire route, and for route segments and historic sites having high potential for public use. Ownership here denotes present administration which in a few cases, such as public lands under lease or withdrawal, may differ from the actual owner. The nature of public agency involvement in the Oregon Trail is described in the section entitled DESCRIPTION OF PRIMARY ROUTE.

Twenty-seven percent of the route and 25 percent of the high-potential segment mileage are on Federal lands. The Bureau of Land Management administers 403 miles (19 percent) of the Oregon Trail route, which is the majority of the federally owned portion. Much of the Bureau's portion (203 miles) has high potential for public use. The Forest Service administers 38 miles of the route, all in Oregon and 28 miles having high public use potential. Other Federal agencies administer 115 miles of the route, including portions flooded by Federal water impoundment projects.

States and their political subdivisions administer 417 miles (20 percent) of the Oregon Trail route. The majority of this mileage is within the rights-of-way of state and county-owned roads and highways. Route segments in this ownership category having high public use potential total 391 miles.

Private ownership, excluding Indian lands, totals 1,060 miles (51 percent) along the route, of which 408 miles received a high-potential rating. The route also crosses 51 miles of Indian lands, of which 5 miles were classed as high-potential. Further investigation on both private and Indian lands may indicate additional road segments having high potential for public use.

Of the 115 historic sites related to the Oregon Trail which have high public use potential, 13 are under Federal agency administration. Four of these are developed and managed by the National Park Service and attract considerable public use. These sites also include 4 miles of the route. Forty-four high-potential sites are owned by states or their political subdivisions and 57 are on private or Indian lands.

TABLE 2. OWNERSHIP OF THE OREGON TRAIL ROUTE, HIGH-POTENTIAL SEGMENTS OF THE ROUTE, AND HIGH-POTENTIAL HISTORIC SITES

	USFS	BLM	NPS	OF	ALL FED	STATE	PRIVATE	INDIAN	TOTAL
MISSOURI AND KANSAS									
Route (miles)				8	8	42	141		191
H.P. Segments (miles)				8	8	16	44		68
H.P. Sites (number)						5	15		20
NEBRASKA									
Route (miles)			4		4	184	241		429
H.P. Segments (miles)			4		4	184	160		348
H.P. Sites (number)			1	1	2	9	17		28
WYOMING									
Route (miles)		262		63	325	87	111		523
H.P. Segments (miles)		106		29	135	87	105		327
H.P. Sites (number)		3	1		4	16	14		34
IDAHO									
Route (miles)		119		36	155	18	300	37	510
H.P. Segments (miles)		85			85	18	56		159
H.P. Sites (number)		2		1	3	4	4	1	12
OREGON AND WASHINGTON									
Route (miles)	38	22		8	68	86	267	14	435[1/]
H.P. Segments (miles)	28	12		7	47	86	43	5	181
H.P. Sites (number)	2		2		4	10	6	1	21
TOTALS									
Route (miles)	38	403	4	115	560	417	1,060	51	2,088[1/]
H.P. Segments (miles)	28	203	4	44	279	391	408	5	1,083
H.P. Sites (number)	2	5	4	2	13	44	56	2	115

KEY: H.P. = High potential for public use. USFS = U.S. Forest Service. BLM = Bureau of Land Management. NPS = National Park Service. OF = Other Federal. STATE = State and political subdivisions.

1/ Does not include the Columbia River Route in Oregon and Washington (113 miles).

ESTIMATED COSTS (PUBLIC AGENCIES)

General

The public funds needed to acquire and develop land identified in the study for such action are estimated here. Annual costs to operate and maintain these areas also are estimated. Actual costs might vary considerably from these estimates because of various factors. For example, land exchanges and donations could reduce acquisition costs. Actual development costs will depend on agency master plans and site plans, and might vary considerably from the estimates in some cases. Volunteer labor could materially reduce development and operation costs. Local public interest often will have considerable bearing on whether or not a privately owned route segment or historic site is acquired, as well as on the degree of subsequent interpretive development.

In cases of landowner refusal to sell an easement for public access, an easement to preserve historic remnants and integrity but not including public access may be appropriate as a means of preserving the resource until further negotiations for public access are possible. Initial acquisition costs in such cases may be less than those used for these estimates, but they could also be more.

Private ownership was determined from available ownership maps, as time did not permit detailed examination of current ownership records. Final decisions on lands to be acquired will require more detailed investigation of ownership and public use potentials by appropriate agencies in conjunction with State or local advisory groups.

Estimated costs are presented for placement of markers along public roads and highways most closely following the actual route, and along cross-country, high-potential segments of the actual route. Actual placement of markers along cross-country segments now in private ownership would not take place until acquisition for public access is completed. Also, study recommendations call for delaying placement of markers along all cross-country segments until adequate measures are at hand to protect historic remnants and artifacts.

Table 3 presents estimated acquisition, development, and annual operations costs for high-potential route segments and historic sites. The estimates do not include acquisition and development costs where such actions are already planned and budgeted by public agencies. The estimates for annual operations include maintenance costs, but do not include costs of operating existing facilities or those now planned and budgeted. The portions of costs in which states or political subdivisions might reasonably be expected to participate are shown.

Table 4 gives estimated costs for marking public roads and highways most closely following the Oregon Trail route. It is expected that

states or political subdivisions would be responsible for placing such markers, and would share in their cost.

Acquisition on Indian lands was not considered. More detailed study of land ownership may indicate parcels of land along the Oregon Trail within the reservations that have been sold to non-Indians and warrant acquisition by Indians. Development costs on Indian lands were not estimated, as the level of development will depend on future Indian desires and investigation of feasibility.

Costs were not estimated for the State of Washington since no high-potential route segments occur within the State and the two high-potential historic sites in Washington (Fort Vancouver and Whitman Mission) have already been developed by the National Park Service. The following text explains information in the tables and how it was derived:

Land Acquisition

High-potential route segments: Estimated costs are presented for acquisition of easements where needed for public access; i.e., along privately owned, cross-country segments and along roaded segments where the land and road are privately owned. Such easements also would contain provisions for preservation of visible remnants and historical integrity within the rights-of-way. In practice, acquisition in fee simple may be appropriate in some cases. Estimates are based on average land values for the type of land involved. An average right-of-way width of 2 chains (132 feet) was used as a basis for estimates, which would result in acquiring 16 acres per mile. In practice, a narrower width may be appropriate for cross-country segments in some cases, such as a narrow corridor for public access. A wider right-of-way may be needed in other cases, for example to protect parallel sets of wagon ruts.

Estimated costs of acquiring easements to protect Oregon Trail remnants on private land next to public roads are not included. The need for such action is highly variable, and decisions must be made on a case-by-case basis after further investigation. Omission of such cost estimates here does not preclude future findings of need by management agencies for this type of acquisition.

Estimates also do not include costs of easements to preserve the historic appearance of private lands adjacent to high-potential segments of the route. The high cost makes such action appropriate only in special cases, after further investigation and as a last resort where measures such as agreements with landowners or land exchanges are not applicable.

High-potential historic sites: Costs are estimated for acquisition of easements for public access and to preserve historic remnants. These

estimates include all high-potential historic sites on privately owned land, except those now developed by private enterprise for public use. Costs are based on average land values for the type of land involved.

Development

High-potential route segments: Estimates include the cost of providing simple directional route markers at 1/2-mile intervals ($60 per marker) along cross-country portions of the route. Interval selection was based on visibility considerations in the open rangeland typical of those route segments.

Estimates also include the cost of providing one simple interpretive sign or display, without shelter, for each high-potential segment ($300 per unit). Because little if any trail construction is needed to provide access along the route, estimates for this type of development were unnecessary. It is expected that master planning will indicate a need to construct trails adjacent to visible Oregon Trail remnants along some cross-country segments to avoid damage to the remnants by the public. Determination of the need and costs for such protective trail construction will require further investigation.

High-potential historic sites: Estimates are given for providing an optimum level of interpretive development needed for historic appreciation and understanding by the public. Estimates are based on broad development categories and average costs.

Operation

Costs are estimated for annual operation and maintenance of high-potential route segments and historic sites, when optimally developed and open to the public. Included are estimated costs of surveillance needed to minimize vandalism. Operation costs of those Oregon Trail sites already developed and open to the public are not included, nor are costs for operating new facilities already planned and budgeted.

Road Marking

Costs are estimated for provision of markers or signs at 2-mile intervals along public roads and highways most closely following the entire length of the primary route, including the South Alternate in Idaho and eastern Oregon and the Columbia River route in Oregon and Washington, in order to establish the proposed Oregon National Historic Trail. Interval selection was based on an estimated frequency needed to serve two purposes: (a) to mark road junctions as necessary, to indicate direction of travel and (b) to mark the Oregon Trail route where near or intersecting roads. Future planning of the road route may indicate a need for a different frequency of marking. Costs are based on an average of $60 per marker.

TABLE 3. ESTIMATED ACQUISITION, DEVELOPMENT, AND OPERATION COST
High-potential route segments and high-potential historic sites
(1974 dollars)

	Capital Costs			Annual
	Total	Acquisition	Development	Operation
MISSOURI				
Route Segments	---	---	---	---
Historic Sites	425,000	100,000	325,000[1]	11,500
Total	425,000	100,000	325,000	11,500
State[4]	212,500	50,000	162,500	10,500
Federal	212,500	50,000	162,500	1,000
KANSAS				
Route Segments	238,200	229,800	8,400	1,300
Historic Sites	436,000	81,000	355,000[1]	34,500
Total	674,200	310,800	363,400	35,800
State[4]	337,100	155,400	181,700	32,200
Federal	337,100	155,400	181,700	3,600
NEBRASKA				
Route Segments	389,800	358,400	31,400	6,900
Historic Sites	410,000	160,000	250,000	62,100
Total	799,800	518,400	281,400	69,000
State[4]	399,900	259,200	140,700	62,100
Federal	399,900	259,200	140,700	6,900
WYOMING				
Route Segments	127,500	100,000	27,500	6,500
Historic Sites	475,000	50,000	425,000[1]	78,200
Total	602,500	150,000	452,500	84,700
State[4]	301,300	75,000	226,300	76,200
Federal	301,200	75,000	226,200	8,500
IDAHO				
Route Segments	98,000	83,000	15,000	3,000
Historic Sites	156,000	1,000	155,000[2]	27,000[2]
Total	254,000	84,000	170,000	30,000
State[4]	141,000	3,000	138,000	27,000
Federal	113,000	81,000	32,000	3,000
OREGON				
Route Segments	66,000	54,000	12,000	3,000
Historic Sites	654,000	300,000	354,000[1]	43,000[1]
Total	720,000	354,000	366,000	46,000
State[4]	347,000	13,000	334,000	44,000
Federal	373,000	341,000[3]	32,000	2,000

TABLE 3. Continued

	Capital Costs			Annual
	Total	Acquisition	Development	Operation
TOTAL				
Route Segments	919,500	825,200	94,300	20,700
Historic Sites	2,556,000	692,000	1,864,000	256,300
GRAND TOTAL	3,475,500	1,517,200	1,958,300	277,000
State[4/]	1,738,800	555,600	1,183,200	252,000
Federal	1,736,700	961,600	775,100	25,000

1/ Estimates include interpretive facilities at Independence, Missouri; Pottawatomie Segment, Kansas; Independence Rock, Wyoming; and Oregon City, Oregon.

2/ Estimate includes reconstruction of Fort Boise.

3/ Could be substantially reduced by land exchange.

4/ Estimated costs in which states or their political subdivisions might reasonably be expected to participate.

TABLE 4. ESTIMATED ROAD MARKING COSTS

Costs to mark public roads and highways most closely following the 2,200-mile primary Oregon Trail route, at $60 per sign and one sign every 2 miles (dollars):

State	Cost
Missouri	$ 500
Kansas	5,200
Nebraska	12,900
Wyoming	15,700
Idaho	15,300
Oregon	16,400
Total	$66,000

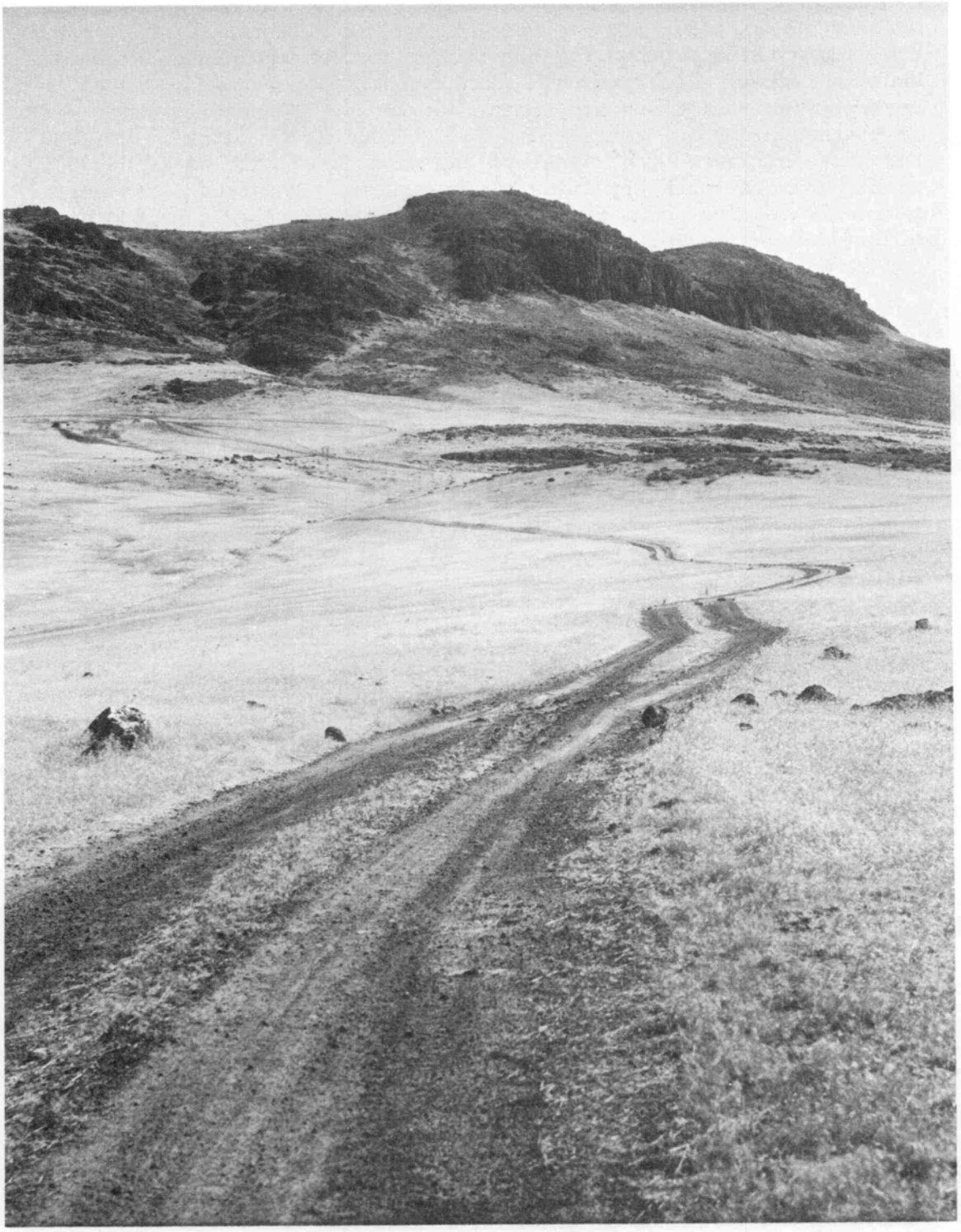
PUBLIC USE

Most of the current public recreation use along the Oregon Trail occurs at those historic sites that have received major interpretive development, such as staffed interpretive centers and reconstructed historic structures. Four of these sites are administered by the National Park Service, one as a national monument (Scotts Bluff, Nebraska), and three as national historic sites (Fort Laramie, Wyoming; Whitman Mission, Washington; and Fort Vancouver, Washington). Attendance at these four sites increased 62 percent from 1965 to 1974, from 358,400 to 580,700 visits. The most spectacular gain was at Fort Vancouver, which went from 70,300 visits in 1965 to 180,200 in 1974. Altogether, 47 high-potential historic sites are presently developed for public use. These receive an estimated 2 million visitor days of recreation use per year.

The magnitude of recreation use for all historic sites along the Oregon Trail, if given full development, is difficult to predict. Estimates can be made for the staffed interpretive facilities proposed at the symbolic ends of the Oregon Trail route (Independence, Missouri, and Oregon City, Oregon), by comparison with similar existing facilities. Both would be located in large metropolitan areas, and each could be expected to draw 250,000 visitors per year within the first 2 or 3 years of construction. Visitation at Fort Boise if reconstructed and at the two other proposed staffed interpretive facilities (Pottawatomie Segment, Kansas, and Independence Rock, Wyoming) would be somewhat less because of their more remote locations; perhaps 150,000 visitors per year. Based on present estimated use at developed historic sites, it is tentatively estimated that use of all 115 high-potential historic sites if optimally developed could exceed 5 million visitor days per year.

Of the 30 route segments having potential for the establishment of interpretive trails, only four short segments have received such development. The undeveloped segments largely are unknown to the public. Recreation use of these has been light, and has been confined mostly to members of state and local historical societies and others who learn of these areas by word of mouth and original research.

Marking of interpretive trails along cross-country segments of the route would result in significant public recreation use for relatively low cost. For comparison, the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail in the Columbia Gorge received an estimated 20,000 visitor days of use in 1972. This is a scenic area within a 2-hour drive of metropolitan Portland. Interpretive trails developed along Oregon Trail segments could receive this volume of use in scenic areas near large population centers. Fewer people would be attracted to the more remote, less scenic cross-country route segments. It is tentatively estimated that, with optimum development and public access, cross-country segments of the Oregon Trail established as interpretive trails could receive a total of 150,000 visitor days per year.



The Teapot Dome Segment in Idaho is pictured here. The terrain is pleasant to the eye, featuring views of undulating sagebrush and grassland rimmed by hills and basalt cliffs.

Much of the existing and proposed Oregon Trail interpretive development involves sites also used for general recreation and other purposes, such as highway rest areas and state parks. For example, Oregon Trail interpretive facilities are programmed for development at seven highway rest areas along Interstate 80-N and at four State parks in Oregon. The State estimates that usage of the rest areas will exceed 4,000,000 people annually when development is complete. The four State parks currently receive about 600,000 day visitors and 75,000 camper nights of use per year. There is no information to indicate the percentage of use at multipurpose areas attributable to Oregon Trail interpretation.

Traffic volume along major highways and freeways that closely follow the proposed Oregon National Historic Trail is not expected to increase significantly as a result of highway marking of the trail. Where lightly used secondary roads are followed, however, traffic may increase significantly on a percentage basis.

To illustrate, representative average daily traffic counts along limited access highways which closely follow the Oregon Trail route, and which should be marked, are: Interstate 80 between Kearney and Ogallala, Nebraska--6,100; Interstate 25 east of Casper, Wyoming--1,900; Interstate 15-W west of American Falls, Idaho--2,700; and Interstate 80-N east of The Dalles, Oregon--7,100 (1973 counts). If marking is carried out along these portions of freeway, and if such marking results in use by an additional 100 vehicles per day, the percentage increase in average daily traffic for these freeway segments would range from only 1 to 5 percent.

In contrast with these segments, the Oregon Trail in many areas is more closely followed by lightly traveled secondary roads than by freeways. These generally provide more flexibility for historic interpretation and signing than freeways and can give the traveler a more intimate feeling for the countryside. Some of these backroads, particularly in Wyoming, Idaho, and Oregon, now average less than 100 vehicles per day. If identified with the trail, they could experience a 100 percent or greater increase in traffic. However, it is not expected that the increase in traffic from marking will generally be great enough to necessitate additional expenditure of funds for road improvements or traffic control.

With respect to the nature of future use, major developed Oregon Trail historic sites will continue to attract a broad cross section of the general public. Living history programs will continue to have particular appeal, especially those in which the public can participate.

Retracing all or portions of the route will attract a broader spectrum of the public than is now the case if proposed route marking, interpretation, and public information programs are carried out. The automobile will continue to be the most popular means for following the approximate

route on public roads, barring acute gasoline shortages. The use of bicycles along these roads may increase, as may the use of buses for group tours.

Cross-country segments of the route marked as interpretive trails will attract the largest number of both hikers and horseback riders near urban areas and in scenic areas. Cross-country segments in remote rangeland areas will probably prove more appealing for horseback travel than for hiking.

Except for historic sites with major interpretive development, most public recreation use along the Oregon Trail comes from those who live near it. This is expected to continue for reasons of convenience, familiarity brought about by proximity, and the probability of increased travel costs. The population of the 57 counties crossed by or bordering the route totaled 2,858,516 in 1970. The seven states along the route numbered 14,952,109 residents, or 7.4 percent of the total United States population. Recent localized activities by historic groups have made Oregon Trail remnants and sites better known through guided bus tours. The Oregon Trail also is receiving increased localized use as an outdoor classroom for instruction in history, for both children and adults.

The season of use along most parts of the Oregon Trail route is approximately 6 months, although some of the major developed sites are open all year. Summer heat and dusty back roads at the lower elevations make travel more comfortable during spring and fall for those retracing the route without air-conditioned vehicles. Cooler temperatures make summer travel more pleasant along the mountainous route segments. Portions of the Barlow Road through the Cascade Mountains are closed by snow until June.

Development to attract greater use along the Oregon Trail route will result in some problems as well as public benefits. Increased use could be accompanied by additional vandalism and unintentional damage. Unprotected historic remnants could prove increasingly attractive to persons searching for artifacts, resulting in damage from excavation and removal of historic relics. Unauthorized use of off-road vehicles could become a greater problem for land management agencies.

Conflicts between user groups could occur if an effort is not made to develop carefully and to control public use. The unmarked portions of the route now are known mainly to members of state and local historical societies, who number in the thousands and are increasing. These people typically have a lifelong interest in preserving the trail remnants, an interest often deriving from ancestral relationships to emigrants. They can be expected to oppose any development that is apt to attract damage or that is historically inaccurate. They also could be expected to oppose off-road vehicle use where it has not been previously established.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC EFFECTS

Action to preserve Oregon Trail remnants and make them available for public use will result in social benefits that are largely intangible. Those who avail themselves of the opportunity to retrace the route and to examine the locations along it where memorable human events took place will, in some measure, relive the emigrant experience. They may attain a new appreciation for the conveniences of modern living and a respect for pioneer resoluteness and endurance. They also may acquire an awareness of the gulf between life and the land as they were then and as they are now.

Implementation of study recommendations will result in economic benefits. Development of all interpretive facilities for which there is potential would result in an estimated 20 man-years of civilian employment per year for operation and maintenance in addition to present employment at existing Oregon Trail facilities. The Oregon Trail as a developed public recreation resource would benefit many businesses along the route, such as motels and restaurants.

Easements to preserve Oregon Trail remnants on private lands for public use would deprive farmers and ranchers of economic benefits that might otherwise be obtained through changes in land use within the area protected. Except where such preservation efforts are voluntary, landowners would be compensated for these "benefits foregone" by monies received from sale of easements. Such easements across rangeland and other areas where land use is generally compatible with historic preservation would not require changes in current use and, therefore, would not result in direct costs to landowners. Easements could result in costs to adjacent landowners from public damage to private lands and property.

A decision at the national level for no action could tend to decrease interest in citizen and agency preservation efforts. It could also bring public pressure for reconsideration or independent action.

The economic impact on alternate land uses of a decision for no action would be minimal. The rate of conversion to other uses of land along visible Oregon Trail remnants would continue to be influenced primarily by consideration of economic benefit rather than of the social value of historic remnants.

APPENDIX A - STUDY APPROACH AND PARTICIPANTS

STUDY APPROACH

The study was led by the Northwest Regional Office, Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, Seattle, Washington. The Bureau's Mid-Continent Regional Office in Denver, Colorado, conducted the study in Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, and Wyoming.

The first task was to map the historic route of the Oregon Trail. Considerable route research had been done previously utilizing emigrant diaries, early survey maps, visible trail remnants, and other evidence. The route from its beginning in the vicinity of Independence, Missouri, through Kansas, Nebraska, and Wyoming had been researched extensively by state agencies. The research was greatly assisted by many years of study by Paul Henderson, a recognized authority on historic routes in that area. The definitive report by Merrill Mattes entitled, The Great Platte River Road, is a basic reference for the route from Independence to Fort Laramie, Wyoming.

In Idaho, a considerable amount of route research and confirmation was done during this study by the Idaho State Historical Society and the Bureau of Land Management. The Bureau of Land Management also researched questionable route segments in Wyoming and Oregon.

In Oregon, the State Highway Division had studied the route through the State over a 2-year period prior to this study. The State Parks and Recreation Branch had completed low-level aerial photography along the route. Also in Oregon, the Forest Service had located much of the Barlow Road, the terminal overland segment of the Oregon Trail, and prepared a plan for its management.

In addition to the route itself, historic sites associated with the Oregon Trail comprise a valuable resource. As part of the study, the National Park Service contracted with retired Federal historian Aubrey L. Haines to inventory these sites. The survey included historical background material on each site. Much of this data was gleaned from the 700-plus diaries and journals written by the emigrants who traveled the Oregon Trail. Many of these diaries are found in state historical society libraries, particularly that of the Oregon Historical Society.

Preliminary investigation showed that most of the original trail has been paved or plowed under, and much of the route lacks a continuous high scenic quality. The study, therefore, concentrated on identifying those segments of the route believed to have high historic interpretation and recreation potential. These judgments were reached through consensus of the study participants. Major criteria used for

these high-potential route segments were scenic quality, the presence of visible wagon ruts or other historic remnants, the presence of significant historic sites, and freedom from intrusions. With some exceptions, the route itself has remained an undeveloped public resource. The needs for acquisition, development, preservation, and further study, therefore, were evaluated for each high-potential route segment.

Similarly, the major historic sites identified during the study were examined to determine their potential for historic interpretation and recreation. Criteria included historic significance, presence of visible historic remnants, scenic quality, and freedom from intrusions. Many historic sites have already been protected and developed for public use. Others have received no protection or development, or are inaccessible to the public. Evaluations, therefore, were made of the need for acquisition, development, preservation, and further study at all sites. As with the route segments, evaluations were reached through participant consensus.

Public comments on the study were obtained through a series of 16 public meetings held along the route during February and March 1974. The study was explained at these meetings, and public use potentials along the Oregon Trail route were illustrated through taped slide presentations. Public comment was invited, and statements and discussion were recorded on tape. A public information brochure was distributed, giving an explanation of the study, a summary of findings, and alternatives for action. The brochure included a tear-out sheet to facilitate public comment on the study alternatives. The results of the written public response are summarized in the report section on FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

MISSOURI AND KANSAS PARTICIPANTS

Federal Agencies

National Park Service
Federal Highway Administration
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service

State Agencies

Missouri Interagency Council for Outdoor Recreation
Missouri State Park Board
Missouri State Highway Commission
Missouri Department of Conservation
Missouri State Historical Society
Kansas State Park and Recreation Authority
Kansas State Historical Society
Kansas State Highway Commission
Planning Division, Kansas Department of Economic Development
Kansas Forestry, Fish, and Game Commission

Local Agencies

Jackson County Park and Recreation Department, Missouri
Parks and Recreation, Independence, Missouri

NEBRASKA PARTICIPANTS

Federal Agencies

National Park Service
Federal Highway Administration
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service

State Agencies

Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
Nebraska State Historical Society
Nebraska State Department of Roads
Nebraska Department of Economic Development
Nebraska State Office of Planning and Programming

Local Representatives

Mr. and Mrs. Paul Henderson, Bridgeport
Mr. Charles W. Martin, Omaha

WYOMING PARTICIPANTS

Federal Agencies

Bureau of Land Management
National Park Service
Federal Highway Administration
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service

State Agencies

Wyoming Recreation Commission
Wyoming Travel Commission
Wyoming State Archives and Historical Department
Wyoming Highway Department

Local Representatives

Mr. and Mrs. Paul Henderson, Bridgeport, Nebraska

IDAHO PARTICIPANTS

Federal Agencies

Bureau of Land Management
National Park Service
Bureau of Indian Affairs
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
U. S. Forest Service
Federal Highway Administration

State Agencies

Idaho State Historical Society
Idaho Department of Parks
Idaho Department of Highways

Local Representatives

Mr. Pat Wilde, Montpelier
Mr. M. D. Beal, Pocatello
Mr. Eliot Davis, American Falls
Mr. Gus Kelker, Twin Falls
Mr. Al Dawson, Burley
Mrs. John Groefsema, Mountain Home
Mr. Eugene B. Chaffee, Boise
Mr. Elmo Peterson, Parma
Mr. George F. Baggley, Boise

OREGON AND WASHINGTON PARTICIPANTS

Federal Agencies

National Park Service
Bureau of Land Management
U. S. Forest Service
Soil Conservation Service
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Federal Highway Administration

State Agencies

State Parks and Recreation Branch, Oregon State Highway Division
Oregon Historical Society
Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission
Washington State Historical Society
Washington Interagency Committee
Washington State Highway Commission

Citizen Representatives

Mr. Horace Arment, Ontario, Oregon
Professor Lee Johnson, Eastern Oregon College, LaGrande, Oregon
Mr. Lawrence (Larry) Smitton, Pendleton, Oregon
Mr. Giles French, Moro, Oregon
Mr. Marion T. Weatherford, Arlington, Oregon
Mrs. Milton W. Belsher, Portland, Oregon

APPENDIX B. Summary of High-Potential Route Segment Characteristics

State and Map Reference	High-Potential Segment Name	Length (miles)	Location	Land Use	Natural Vegetation	Topography	Environmental Intrusions & Rating (1)	Potentials: Highway Marking	Potentials: Cross-Country Interp. Trail	Access (2) Category	Visible (3) Wagon Ruts	Number of High-Potential Sites
KA-A	Johnson County	10	Eastern Kansas	Forest-Urban	Oak Hickory	Rolling Hills	Roads Urbanizations -M-	X		Cc Ro	No	0
KA-B	Clinton Reservoir	8	Eastern Kansas	Agriculture-Forest	Oak-Hickory & Grasses	Rolling Hills	Reservoir Const. (Pot.) -L-	X		Ro	No	2
KA-C	Pottawatomie Mission	7	Eastern Kansas	Forest-Urban	Cottonwood Willow	Wooded - River Bluff	Highway -H-	X		Cc Ro	No	1
KA-D	Louis Vieux	9	Northeastern Kansas	Forest	Oak Hickory	Rolling Hills	Reservoir Const. (Pot.) -M-		X	Cc	No	2
KA-E	Prairie	22	Northeastern Kansas	Rangeland	Bluestem Grasses	Rolling Plains	Highway -M-	X	X	Cc Ro	Di	0
KA-F	Alcove Spring	12	Northern Kansas	Agriculture Forest	Ash, Willow Cottonwood	Rolling Hills River Valley	None -L-	X	X	Cc Ro	Di	3
NB-A	Rock Creek Station	40	Southern Nebraska	Agriculture	Bluestem Grasses	Plains - River Valley	Roads -M-	X	(4)	Cc Ro	Di	3
NB-B	Fort Kearny	168	Southern Nebraska	Agriculture	Grasses & Hardwoods	Plains - River Valley	Occasional Highway -L-	X		Cc Fw Ro	Di	5
NB-C	Scottsbluff	140	Central Nebraska	Agriculture Rangeland	Grasses & Hardwoods	River Valley Eroded Hills	Roads -M-	X	X	Cc Fw Ro	Di	16
WY-A	Torrington	21	Eastern Wyoming	Agriculture Rangeland	Grasses & Hardwoods	River Valley	Roads -M-	X		Ro	Di	1
WY-B	Fort Laramie	13	Eastern Wyoming	Rangeland	Grasses & Cottonwood	Rolling & Broken Hills	None -L-	X	X	Cc Ro	Di	3
WY-C	James Bridger Ferry	34	Eastern Wyoming	Rangeland	Sagebrush & Juniper	Broken Hills & Rangeland	Roads -M-	X	X	Cc Ro	Di	1

(1) L - Low
M - Medium
H - High
See page 23 for definition

(2) Cc - Cross-country
Fw - Freeway
Ro - Roaded
See page 23 for definition

(3) Co - Continuous
Di - Discontinuous
No - None

(4) Potential for short interpretive trails close to roads

APPENDIX B. Summary of High-Potential Route Segment Characteristics
(Continued)

State and Map Reference	High-Potential Segment Name	Length (miles)	Location	Land Use	Natural Vegetation	Topography	Environmental Intrusions & Rating (1)	Potentials: Highway Marking	Potentials: Cross-Country Interp. Trail	Access (2) Category	Visible (3) Wagon Ruts	Number of High-Potential Sites
WY-D	Laramie Peak	31	Eastern Wyoming	Rangeland	Grasses & Sagebrush	Broken Hills & Streams	Fencing -L-	X	X	Cc Ro	Co	0
WY-E	Platte River	22	Central Wyoming	Rangeland	Grasses & Sagebrush	Rolling Hills River Valley	Urbanization Utility Lines -H-	X		Ro	Co	3
WY-F	Fort Caspar	15	Central Wyoming	Urban	Grass, sage, trees	Rolling Hills River Bluffs	Urbanization -H-	X		Ro	Di	6
WY-G	Oregon Trail Road	32	Central Wyoming	Rangeland	Sagebrush	Rolling Hills Bluffs	Fencing -L-	X		Ro	Co	0
WY-H	Independence Rock	10	Central Wyoming	Rangeland	Sagebrush & Grasses	Rolling Hills	None -L-	X	(4)	Cc Ro	Di	3
WY-I	Split Rock	14	Central Wyoming	Rangeland	Sage, Willow, Grasses	Rolling Hills	Roads -L-	X	X	Cc Ro	Di	1
WY-J	South Pass	53	Central Wyoming	Rangeland Forest	Sage, pine, fir	Rolling Hills	None -L-	X	X	Cc Ro	Co	1
WY-K	Lombard Butte	44	Western Wyoming	Rangeland	Sage, Cottonwood	Rolling Hills	Mining -M-	X	X	Cc Ro	Di	2
WY-L	Little Muddy Creek	37	Western Wyoming	Forest Rangeland	Sagebrush, Grasses	Rough and Hilly	None -L-		X	Cc	Di	0
ID-A	West Thomas Fork	2	Eastern Idaho	Rangeland	Sagebrush, Grasses	Mountainous	Wheat fields (in distance) -M-		X	Cc	Di	0
ID-B	Big Hill	5	Eastern Idaho	Rangeland	Sagebrush, Grasses	Mountainous	Road -M-	X		Ro	Di	0
ID-C	Register Rock	14	Central Idaho	Rangeland	Sagebrush, Juniper	Rolling Hills	Freeway -H-	X	(4)	Ro	Di	2

(1) L - Low
M - Medium
H - High
See page 23 for definition

(2) Cc - Cross-country
Fw - Freeway
Ro - Roaded
See page 23 for definition

(3) Co - Continuous
Di - Discontinuous
No - None

(4) Potential for short interpretive trails close to roads

APPENDIX B. Summary of High-Potential Route Segment Characteristics
(Continued)

State and Map Reference	High-Potential Segment Name	Length (miles)	Location	Land Use	Natural Vegetation	Topography	Environmental Intrusions & Rating (1)	Potentials				
								Highway Marking	Cross-Country Interp. Trail	Access (2) Category	Visible (3) Wagon Ruts	Number of High-Potential Sites
ID-D	Raft River	9	Central Idaho	Rangeland	Sagebrush-Grass	Rolling Hills, Rocky	Seeding -M-		X	Cc	Co	1
ID-E	Milner Dam	4	Central Idaho	Rangeland	Sagebrush-Grass	Gently Rolling	Vehicle Use -M-		X	Cc	Di	0
ID-F	Salmon Falls	8	Central Idaho	Rangeland	Sagebrush-Grass	Rolling	Roads, Farms -M-	X	X	Cc Ro	Di	0
ID-G	Three Island Crossing	19	Western Idaho	Agriculture Rangeland	Sagebrush-Grass	Gently Rolling	Power Lines -L-	X	X	Cc Ro	Di	1
ID-H	Teapot Dome	48	Western Idaho	Rangeland	Sagebrush-Grass	Gently Rolling	Power Lines Ranching -M-	X	X	Cc Ro	Di	1
ID-I	Indian Cove	18	Western Idaho	Agriculture Rangeland	Sagebrush-Grass	Rolling	Roads, Resvrs Power Lines -H-	X	X	Cc Ro	Di	0
ID-J	Jackass Butte	21	Western Idaho	Rangeland	Sagebrush	Rocky, Rolling	None -L-		X	Cc	Di	1
ID-K	Bonneville Point	11	Western Idaho	Rangeland	Sagebrush-Grass	Rolling	Power Lines -M-		X	Cc	Co	1
OR-A	Keeney Pass	5	Eastern Oregon	Rangeland	Sagebrush-Grass	Rolling	Power Lines Roads -M-	X	(4)	Ro	Di	0
OR-B	Alkali Springs	17	Northeastern Oregon	Rangeland	Sagebrush-Cheatgrass	Level to Rolling	Fencing -L-	X		Ro	Di	1
OR-C	Sisley Creek	7	Northeastern Oregon	Rangeland	Juniper, Sage, Grass	Steep Hills Canyon Bottom	Power Lines Roads -M-	X	(4)	Ro	Di	0
OR-D	White Swan Mine	7	Northeastern Oregon	Rangeland	Bunchgrass, Sagebrush	Steeply Rolling	Fencing -L-		X	Cc	Di	0

(1) L - Low
M - Medium
H - High
See page 23 for definition

(2) Cc - Cross-country
Fw - Freeway
Ro - Roaded
See page 23 for definition

(3) Co - Continuous
Di - Discontinuous
No - None

(4) Potential for short interpretive trails close to roads

APPENDIX B. Summary of High-Potential Route Segment Characteristics
(Continued)

State and Map Reference	High-Potential Segment Name	Length (miles)	Location	Land Use	Natural Vegetation	Topography	Environmental Intrusions & Rating (1)	Potentials: Highway Marking	Potentials: Cross-Country Interp. Trail	Access (2) Category	Visible (3) Wagon Ruts	Number of High-Potential Sites
OR-E	Virtue Flat	4	Northeastern Oregon	Rangeland	Bunchgrass, Sagebrush	Flat to Gently Rolling	Fencing -L-		X	Cc	Di	0
OR-F	Ladd Hill	3	Northeastern Oregon	Rangeland	Sage, Grass, Some Pine	Gentle to Steep Hills	Some Roads -L-		X	Cc	Di	1
OR-G	LaGrande	7	Northeastern Oregon	Rangeland	Sage, Grass, Some Pine	Gentle to Steep Hills	Some Roads -L-		X	Cc	Di	0
OR-H	Hilgard Junction	10	Northeastern Oregon	Forest	Pine, Fir, Bunchgrass	Ridges and Canyons	Road Const. Logging -M-		X	Cc	Di	1
OR-I	Deadman's Pass	6	Northeastern Oregon	Forest	Pine and Grass	Flat to Gently Rolling	Power Lines Roads, Fwy. -H-	X		Ro	Di	2
OR-J	Cayuse	5	Northeastern Oregon	Rangeland	Grass	Descending Ridge	Power Lines Pipeline -M-		X	Cc	Di	1
OR-K	Echo West	9	Northern Oregon	Rangeland	Cheatgrass, Sagebrush	Flat to Gently Rolling	Fencing -L-	X	X	Cc Ro	Di	0
OR-L	Boardman	12	Northern Oregon	Rangeland	Cheatgrass, Sagebrush	Flat to Gently Rolling	Road, Wells -L-		X	Cc	Co	1
OR-M	Deschutes River	15	Northern Oregon	Rangeland	Grass, Willow	Rolling Hills	Power Lines Roads -M-	X		Ro	Di	2
OR-N	East Barlow	21	Northwestern Oregon	Forest	Coniferous Forest	Mountainous	Logging Roads -M-	X		Ro	Di	1
OR-O	Barlow Pass	1	Northwestern Oregon	Forest	Coniferous Forest	Mountainous	None -L-		X	Cc	Co	1
OR-P	West Barlow	52	Northwestern Oregon	Agriculture, Forest	Coniferous Forest	Mountains, Gently Rolling	Urbanization Highway -H-	X	(4)	Ro	Di	4

(1) L - Low
M - Medium
H - High
See page 23 for definition

(2) Cc - Cross-country
Fw - Freeway
Ro - Roaded
See page 23 for definition

(3) Co - Continuous
Di - Discontinuous
No - None

(4) Potential for short interpretive trails close to roads

APPENDIX C - CRITERIA FOR NATIONAL SCENIC TRAILS

National Significance

National scenic trails, for their length or the greater portion thereof, should incorporate a maximum of significant characteristics, tangible and intangible, so that those, when viewed collectively, will make the trail worthy of national scenic designation. National significance implies that these characteristics; i.e., the scenic, historical, natural, or cultural qualities of the areas through which the trail passes, are superior when compared to those of other trails--not including national scenic trails--situated throughout the country. National scenic trails should, with optimum development, be capable of promoting interest and drawing power that could extend to any section of the conterminous United States.

Route Selection

1. The routes of national scenic trails should be so located as to provide for maximum outdoor recreation potential and for the conservation and enjoyment of the nationally significant scenic, historic, natural, or cultural qualities of the areas through which such trails may pass. They should avoid, insofar as practicable, established highways, motor roads, mining areas, power transmission lines, existing commercial and industrial developments, range fences and improvements, private operations, and any other activities that would be incompatible with the protection of the trail in its natural condition and its use for outdoor recreation.

2. National scenic trails of major historic significance should adhere as accurately as possible to their main historic route or routes.

Access

National Scenic trails should be provided with adequate public access through establishment of connecting trails or by use of trail systems other than the National Trail System. Access should be provided at reasonable intervals and should take into consideration the allowance for trips of shorter duration.

Placement

National scenic trails shall be primarily land based.

Length

National scenic trails shall be extended trails, usually several hundred miles or longer in length.

Continuity

National scenic trails should be continuous for the duration of their length except where no practicable or feasible interconnection exists.

APPENDIX D
PROPOSED CRITERIA FOR NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAILS

Designation

National Historic Trails may be authorized and designated only by Act of Congress. Studies of routes for designation as National Historic Trails shall be made for those trail routes named in the National Trails System Act which are substantially of a historic nature and other similar study routes subsequently authorized by Congress.

Determination of the national significance of a proposed National Historic Trail shall be made in accord with the criteria of national significance developed under the Historic Sites Act of 1935. As is the case in the designation of National Historic Landmarks, the criteria which address the qualities of association and integrity will apply to the entire historic entity and to the segments recommended for specific use and identification.

National Historic Trails are segments of historic routes established as interpretive/recreation trails. Travel by foot, horseback, bicycle, or other non-motorized means would be permitted where appropriate along such trails. A historic trail may be on or follow a waterway. Segments chosen should represent the route or its general historic environment or contain historic structures and sites important to the trail. Selected, existing public highways and roads approximating the historic alignment of a historic route may be marked to facilitate retracement of the historic route by motorized vehicle or bicycle and tie together trail segments.

The Federal Government would be responsible for protecting and maintaining only those segments of the trail crossing Federal lands. Federal acquisition would be restricted to those lands needed for insuring historical integrity or for the interpretation and preservation of historic sites, structures, objects, and/or trail remnants having high potential for enhancing the public's identification of the Nation's historic heritage, or whose historic integrity could not be preserved under any other ownership. The balance would be protected and maintained by States and local governments and private interests. Recreational use of a National Historic Trail shall be directed toward or complement the appreciation of its history and its surviving historic remnants.

National Historic Trail studies shall be conducted by the Secretary of the Interior or by the Secretary of Agriculture where lands administered by him are involved. Such studies shall be conducted in consultation with the heads of other Federal agencies administering land through which the proposed historic trail would pass and in cooperation

with interested interstate, State, and local government agencies, public and private organizations, and landowners and land users concerned. An environmental assessment is required for each study.

Route Location

Routes, or segments thereof, containing man-made developments of a disruptive or distracting nature and lacking historical integrity generally will not be established as National Historic Trails.

To facilitate retracement of designated historic routes, existing public roads and highways nearest to the route's historic location may be marked. Guide maps may be made available and interpretive displays erected to indicate to the traveler where the actual historic route is being followed or crossed.

Development of National Historic Trails should be accomplished in a manner that will protect historic sites, remnants and artifacts. Consideration should be given to protection of historic trails from incompatible land use.

APPENDIX E - COMMENTS OF THE GOVERNORS AND FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS

Missouri

Executive Office 141

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EXECUTIVE OFFICE
STATE OF MISSOURI
JEFFERSON CITY

CHRISTOPHER S. BOND
GOVERNOR

October 31, 1975

Mr. Maurice Lundy, Regional Director
Bureau of Outdoor Recreation
915 Second Avenue, Room 990
Seattle, Washington 93174

Dear Mr. Lundy:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Oregon Trail Study.

No adverse comments resulted from the review of the report and no errors or deficiencies were noted in the EIS.

The portion of Oregon Trail which lies in Missouri is small compared to the trail's overall length but is very significant because it was the starting point for the long trek West. We feel that the provisions as recommended in this report would sufficiently commemorate the Oregon Trail in Missouri.

Thank you again for the opportunity to review the report.

Sincerely,

GOVERNOR

prw

STATE OF KANSAS

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
State Capitol
Topeka

ROBERT F. BENNETT
Governor

September 22, 1975

Mr. Maurice H. Lundy, Regional Director
Bureau of Outdoor Recreation
195 Second Avenue, Room 990
Seattle, Washington 98174

Dear Mr. Lundy:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the draft environmental impact statement for the Oregon Trail study. Some errors were noted, but I am presuming that you have been in touch with our State Historical Society about the Kansas portions, including the feeder lines.

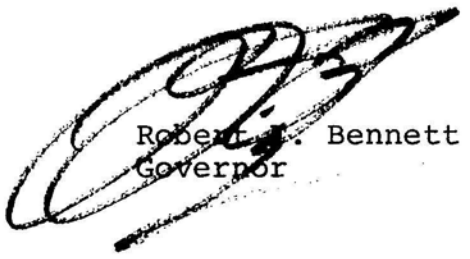
Unquestionably, the Oregon Trail was of great historical significance to the expansion and development of our nation, and designation of the trail route as a National Historic Trail would be most appropriate. The State of Kansas has recognized the importance of the Oregon Trail by its acquisition for the public benefit of a number of historic sites on or adjacent to the trail and by the placement of nine different Kansas Historical Markers along the route to call attention to historic sites and to tell some of the many stories of the trail.

The study designated a number of segments in Kansas as having high potential for public use as recreational and/or historic sites and recommended their acquisition or development. Also, an interpretive center was suggested for the Pottawatomie segment, presumably at the old Pottawatomie Baptist Mission near Topeka, which is now being developed as a state historic site. The importance of the trail will, of course, be recognized there. However, if this study is

approved by Congress, Kansas would need to examine carefully its priorities for development of recreational and historic resources before making any commitment to implementing the study's recommendations for state action.

We are pleased to endorse the concept of commemoration of the Oregon Trail. Better marking and preservation of this historic trail should help to increase our citizens' awareness of their rich heritage.

Very sincerely,



RFB:m
nm

Robert F. Bennett
Governor

OFFICE
OF
PLANNING
AND
PROGRAMMING

STATE OF NEBRASKA

BOX 94601 · STATE CAPITOL · LINCOLN, NEBRASKA · 68509 · (402) 471-2414

Governor J. James Exon
State Planning Officer

W. Don Nelson
Director

November 10, 1975

Maurice H. Lundy, Regional Director
Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, Northwest Region
United States Department of the Interior
915 Second Avenue, Room 990
Seattle, Washington 98174

Dear Mr. Lundy:

The following comments relate to the review of the draft environmental statement for the Oregon Trail Study.

While it would be "nice" to have all the high potential areas along the Trail preserved, the acquisition and development of these areas and corridor may be regarded as a nuisance by many of the landholders who have the Trail cutting through their property.

Presently, the State of Nebraska is considering the acquisition and development of some of the "key sites" along the Trail. However, it is doubtful if the development of all the high potential segments would be possible or practical.

This office would be interested in receiving future information concerning development of the Oregon Trail.

Sincerely,

Warren G. White
Natural Resources Coordinator

WGW:jdb

cc: Bill Hoppner
Willard Barbee
Marvin Kivett

WYOMING
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
CHEYENNE

ED HERSCHLER
GOVERNOR

October 17, 1975

Mr. Maurice H. Lundy
Regional Director
U. S. Department of Interior
Bureau of Outdoor Recreation
Room 990
915 Second Avenue
Seattle, Washington 93174

Dear Mr. Lundy:

I appreciate the opportunity to review and comment on the Oregon Trail Study Report and the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. In this manner, I can support and maybe complement the diligent efforts of the participating Wyoming agencies in helping to formulate the report. The coordination of the administration and management of the Oregon Trail is long overdue and essential to its preservation. The fact that it is estimated that eighty percent or more of the trail has undergone modification shows a dereliction of our duties as citizens to retain our historical heritage.

Because of the large number of historical sites and the visibility of the trail in Wyoming, we have an obligation as a state to preserve some key sections before our state becomes over-populated. Wyoming's new Land Use Administration can play a part and encourage counties to incorporate in their land use plans protection for certain segments of the trail. Wyoming's focus for the Bicentennial is the creation of a state park at Independence Rock which ties in directly with the Oregon Trail and BLM's plans to protect and to inform the public about other historical sites nearby.

I am also concerned about the considerable damage being done to the trail in Wyoming from heavy equipment, exploration, pipeline construction, etc. It is conceivable that in certain places light family type vehicles might do less damage than the use of the trail for access by commercial companies.

Even though preservation of certain segments of the trail and sites is essential, I can see the real danger of calling the public's attention to the route. One has to weigh the

consequences of not doing anything against the consequences of disturbance by overuse. Therefore, everything should be developed with caution and taste. The standardization of signing is a start and the proposed delay of marking until segments are protected, as mentioned in the EIS, is important. Because the view and scene in Wyoming enhances the trail's features, as well as the obvious specific site preservation, the measures to prevent damage by off-road recreational vehicles and the over-exploitation by concessionaires as mentioned in the report should be followed. The recreational aspect of the project should not outweigh the historical preservation aspect.

One of the most vital impacts mentioned in the EIS is the impacts on soil and vegetation. For this type of project, the analysis of the soil condition is important for local land use planners, as well as for state and federal agencies. I hope it will be stressed in the future, site specific analysis as on Page 42 of the EIS.

The proposal calls for the overall coordination of matters pertaining to the Oregon Trail to be assigned to the Department of Interior. How will this be done within that structure? The Oregon Trail Advisory Council, by the implication of its name, has an advisory function. It will be developing guidelines, but it is not clear in the EIS as to whether they have the responsibility for final approval.

It is not entirely clear in the EIS and the report as to the policy for land acquisition and the responsibility of the federal and state government in that policy. Mention is made on Page 11 of the EIS that the land outside of federal boundaries is the responsibility of the states to acquire "as a rule." Also mentioned is that high-potential route segments will be a priority and negotiations with the landowner will be to obtain easements for access, but consideration will be given to easements for preservation as a temporary measure. What happens if there is a complete refusal by the landowner? Also, the cost of the markers along public roads and highways is mentioned as the responsibility of the states and political subdivisions, Page 61 of the report. Who has the responsibility for marking other areas and who standardizes and authorizes the signing?

Future energy resource development in Wyoming and its associated transmission facilities, makes it imperative for Wyoming to make a conscientious effort now to preserve

the remnants of the Oregon Trail. The Oregon Trail Study Report and the Draft Environmental Impact Statement therefore, are timely proposals.

Yours sincerely,

EH/ldb

STATE OF IDAHO

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

BOISE

CECIL D. ANDRUS
GOVERNOR

March 17, 1976

Mr. Maurice Lundy
Regional Director
Bureau of Outdoor Recreation
915 Second Avenue
Federal Bldg - Room 990
Seattle, WA 98174

Dear Mr. Lundy:

I have reviewed the Oregon Trail Study, dated June 1975, which your agency has prepared and I would like to say that I agree and concur with the recommendations proposed for the Oregon Trail.

It appears to me to be the most feasible way to preserve the trail because so much of it is now in private ownership and much of the trail has been lost due to farming or construction of highways.

Let me also urge that this trail become a national historic trail as outlined and proposed by Congress at this time.

This being our nation's bicentennial, I can't think of a better historic route to honor, as it meant so much to the development of Idaho and the northwest.

Again, I concur with the recommendations presented in the Oregon Trail Plan and also recommend that this trail be designated as a national historic trail.

Sincerely,

Cecil D. Andrus

CECIL D. ANDRUS
Governor

jm/DJT

ROBERT W. STRAUB
GOVERNOR

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
STATE CAPITOL
SALEM 97310

November 10, 1975

Mr. Kent Frizzell
U. S. Department of the Interior
Office of the Secretary
Washington, D. C. 20240

Dear Mr. Frizzell:

D3819 - Oregon Trail

We strongly support designation of the entire route of the Oregon Trail as a National Historic Trail and Travelway, along with the federal legislation necessary to effect such designation.

Because of its importance as a national asset, we agree that overall coordination should be the responsibility of the Secretary of the Interior, working with the various local agencies which have jurisdiction. We believe also that a National Oregon Trail Advisory Council is needed to supplement state advisory councils in establishing policies.

Priority for development should be given to high-potential cross-country segments and historic sites near urban areas along with sites possessing multiple recreation potentials. Marking the route should receive high priority because, for a relatively small expenditure, nationwide attention could be obtained. Federal financial assistance could greatly accelerate state and local acquisition and development of the Oregon Trail Program.

We believe that motor vehicles should be prohibited from those segments of cross-country trail which retain their historic integrity, especially where there are good examples of wagon ruts. Development of a bicycle trail along the Oregon Trail route should be given strong consideration. Such a trail would accommodate the growing public interest in bicycle touring and retracing historic routes.

The interpretive displays which are being developed in State Parks and Safety Rest Areas along I-80N will be completed by mid-1976. No additional interpretation will be needed in these locations in the near future. A new Oregon Trail brochure will be published by the State early next year.

We consider the 12-mile stretch of the Oregon Trail across the Boardman Bombing Range to be one of the most significant trail segments in Oregon, an irreplaceable resource that should be protected in planning for agricultural or power developments. In addition, other remaining traces of the Oregon Trail should be protected during the development of transmission lines, pipelines, grazing and range improvements, logging and road construction on federal lands. On private lands, we anticipat that the State Parks Branch, the Oregon Historical Society, the proposed State Advisory Council and interested citizens will work with landowners to preserve and protect remaining stretches of the trail.

We appreciate the opportunity to review the comprehensive study of the Oregon Trail prepared by your staff. There is a great deal of public interest in and support for efforts to commemorate this historic route. Designation as a National Historic Trail and Travelway will be an important step toward providing the national recognition that the Oregon Trail so justly deserves.

Sincerely,

Governor

RWS/jh

OCT 15 1975

The Honorable Kent Frizzell
Acting Secretary of the Interior
United States Department of the Interior
Office of the Secretary
Washington, D. C. 20240

Dear Secretary Frizzell:

Thank you for the review draft of the Oregon Trail Study. I support the designation of this historically significant route as the Oregon National Historic Trail, and wish to commend you for the excellent report which resulted in such a recommendation.

I know that copies of this study have also been furnished to the State Highway Commission, Historical Society, Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation, Office of Program Planning and Fiscal Management, and the Parks and Recreation Commission. These agencies are reviewing that report at this time and if they have any specific comments regarding particular portions of the report they will forward them directly to your office within the 45 days stipulated by your letter.

Thank you again for allowing the State of Washington the opportunity to comment on this important element of our western history.

Sincerely,

Daniel J. Evans
Governor

DJE:ks
cc: Lee Buffington, Office of Program Planning and Fiscal Management
Bill Bulley, Department of Highways
Stanley E. Francis, Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation
Bruce LeRoy, Historical Society
Charles Odegaard, Parks and Recreation Commission

IR
INSTALLATIONS AND LOGISTICS

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

Nov. 20 1975

Honorable Thomas S. Kleppe
Secretary of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240

Dear Mr. Kleppe:

In response to your letter of September 18, 1975 to the Secretary we have reviewed your Department's proposed report on the Oregon Trail Study conducted pursuant to the National Trail System Act, Public Law 90-543, and have no substantive comment to make thereon.

We do appreciate the opportunity afforded to us to review the report.

Sincerely yours,

Perry J. Fliakas
Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense
(Installations and Housing)

AMERICAN REVOLUTION BICENTENNIAL 1776-1976

THE SECRETARY OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
WASHINGTON, D. C.. 20410

24 NOV 1975

Honorable Thomas S. Kleppe
Secretary of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240

Dear Mr. Secretary:

This is in response to your invitation to review and comment on the Draft Report on the "Oregon Trail - A Potential Addition to the National Trails System," dated June 1975. This letter will comment only on the Oregon Trail Study itself, the review of the Environmental Impact Statement is being completed by the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD's) Region X Office in Seattle.

We applaud the efforts of the Department of the Interior to identify and preserve such a tangible item of our heritage as the Oregon Trail, and it has our full support. The emigrants who traveled this trail over a century ago and settled the Northwest provided the best claim for extending our Nation's sovereignty to the Pacific Coast. We can think of no more fitting memorial than to preserve this trail for the inspiration of future generations. We are not overly concerned that a continuous uninterrupted path from Independence, Missouri, to Oregon City, is no longer possible, the wonder is that so much of it can still be found and in much the same condition as it was in 1850, and further that a great deal of it is in public ownership or in the hands of sympathetic private owners.

We know that many of the scenic attractions of the west happen to be where population is sparse, and the best examples should be preserved wherever they occur. We also believe there is considerable merit in recognizing that greater expenditures for acquisition and preservation are justified for those segments of the trail which are easily accessible to urban population concentrations. More people will see and use them near our cities even though more scenic spots and areas of greater historical significance may lie elsewhere.

Where portions of the trail in rural areas are located to the side of an interstate highway we suggest that they be provided access by a road which roughly parallels the interstate,

extending from interchange to another interchange to offer travelers the opportunity of leaving the high speed road, change their pace of driving to a more restful speed, and view at first hand, stopping where they will, portions of the trail. The traveler is moving in the same direction, he does not lose too much time from his day's travel and he is provided a respite from the tensions of high speed driving.

The continuity of the trail is most likely to be lost in and near urban areas where the pressures of high land value make pristine preservation difficult if not impossible. The interrupted portions will still have interest, the visual portion of the trail can serve as the nucleus of a local park which can also be furnished with picnic facilities and other recreation attractions.

We appreciate the opportunity of lending our support to this endeavor.

Sincerely,

Carla A. Hills

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

ASSISTANT SECRETARY

4 NOV 1975

Honorable Kent Frizzell
Acting Secretary of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We have reviewed with interest the Department of the Interior's proposed report concerning the Oregon Trail conducted pursuant to the National Trails System Act. We have no substantive comments concerning the report, except to note that its preparation has been well coordinated with highway agencies.

We support the Interior Department's recommendation that the 2000-mile route be designated as the Oregon National Historic Trail, with development confined to segments which offer good opportunities for historic interpretation and for recreation.

Sincerely,

Judith T. Connor
Assistant Secretary for Environment,
Safety, and Consumer Affairs

FEDERAL ENERGY ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20461

6 NOV 1975

OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

Honorable Thomas S. Kleppe
Secretary of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240

Dear Mr. Secretary:

In response to Mr. Frizzell's request of September 18, 1975, the Federal Energy Administration has reviewed the Oregon Trail study. The study is extremely interesting and we support the Department of the Interior's efforts to preserve important parts of our Nation's physical heritage for both recreational pleasure and historic value for the American public.

We are concerned, however, that the study did not consider energy and mineral resources. The proposed trail, including the first 15 high potential historical sites located along the trail, will traverse coal deposits in northwest Missouri and northeast Kansas. Coal deposits in southwest Wyoming and southeast Idaho underlie either the primary or the related Oregon Trail.

The proposed trail in Wyoming will traverse the southern edge of the Powder River Basin. Within this area, the Dave Johnston Mine is currently producing large amounts of coal through surface mining methods. There are plans to expand this mining operation to supply coal to a 750 MW power plant in Douglas. Also, Exxon operates a large uranium mine, the Highland Mine in Douglas. In western Wyoming, near Lombard Ferry, the proposed trail will cross several Bureau of Mines' oil shale sites. Finally, the trail will be very close to several designated areas for potential geothermal resources.

In light of our continuing energy needs and the fact that Wyoming is supplying large quantities of coal and uranium ore, and may have potential for geothermal development, we believe an assessment should be made as to the impact the proposed trail may have on these western energy developments before a final decision is made.

We appreciate the opportunity to express our views on the Oregon Trail study and hope that our comments will be useful to you.

Sincerely,

Frank G. Zarb
Administrator

FEDERAL POWER COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20426

IN REPLY REFER TO:

6 NOV 1975

Honorable Thomas S. Kleppe
Secretary of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

Reference: D3819 - Oregon Trail

Dear Mr. Secretary:

This is in response to your letter of September 18, 1975, inviting comments of the Federal Power Commission on your Department's proposed report on the Oregon Trail study, conducted pursuant to the National Trails System Act, P.L. 90-543. The study covered the 2,000-mile route of the Oregon Trail from Independence, Missouri, to Oregon City, Oregon. A draft environmental impact statement on the proposal was transmitted by separate correspondence from the Regional Director, Northwest Region, Bureau of Outdoor Recreation. This letter provides comments on both documents.

The proposed report recommends that the entire route be designated as the Oregon National Historic Trail. Public use facilities would be developed along 48 segments of the route, totaling 1,082 miles, and at 115 historic sites found to have good potential for historic interpretation or public recreation. Of the high potential route segments, 324 miles would be established as cross-country interpretive trails.

The Federal Power Commission staff has reviewed the material furnished to determine the effects of the proposals on matters affecting the Commission's responsibilities. Such responsibilities relate to the development of hydroelectric power and assurance of the reliability and adequacy of electric service under the Federal Power Act, and the construction and operation of natural gas pipelines under the Natural Gas Act.

Review by the staff indicates that the Oregon Trail route followed a number of major rivers, many segments of which have been developed,

AMERICAN REVOLUTION BICENTENNIAL 1776-1976

or have potential to be developed, for hydroelectric power generation. The following existing hydroelectric projects appear to be located on or in the immediate vicinity of the trail:

Project	River	Installed Capacity (kW)	Owner	FPC Licensed Project No.
Kearney	Platte	1,500	Nebraska Public Power Dist.	-
Gothenburg	Platte	400	Nebraska Public Power Dist.	-
Soda	Bear	14,000	Utah Power & Light Co.	20
American Falls	Snake	27,500	Idaho Power Co.	2258 1/
Upper Salmon A	Snake	18,000	Idaho Power Co.	2258 2/
Upper Salmon B	Snake	16,500	Idaho Power Co.	2258 2/
C. J. Strike	Snake	82,800	Idaho Power Co.	2055
Swan Falls	Snake	10,265	Idaho Power Co.	503
The Dalles	Columbia	1,119,000	Corps of Engineers	-
Bonneville	Columbia	518,400	Corps of Engineers	-
West Linn	Willamette	13,900	Crown Zellerbach Corp.	2233
Sullivan	Willamette	15,400	Portland General Electric Co.	2233
Oregon City	Willamette	3,450	Publishers Paper Co.	2233

1/ Project will be redeveloped in conjunction with the replacement of the Bureau of Reclamation's American Falls dam project. The new powerhouse, licensed as FPC project No. 2736, will have some 92,400 kilowatts of installed capacity.

2/ Application for license pending.

Section 9(b) of P.L. 90-543 directs Federal agencies, including the Federal Power Commission, to cooperate with the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to assure that any properties having values suitable for trail purposes may be made available for such use. It is presumed that the existing hydroelectric projects, including those licensed by the Commission, would not conflict with the national trail designation. The report mentions that, in the case of projects located in the Platte River valley, the existing reservoirs and recreation areas could be further related to the Oregon Trail through interpretive development and connecting trails. Incidentally, any public use development within licensed project boundaries implemented in connection with the proposed national trail would involve consideration and action by the Federal Power Commission.

The staff review shows that, in addition to the existing hydroelectric projects, there are a number of sites in the Missouri and Columbia River basins in the immediate vicinity of the Oregon Trail which are known to have potential for hydroelectric power development. Presumably, designation as a national historic trail would not necessarily preclude future development of these facilities.

The staff notes that there are several steam-electric power plants located in the vicinity of the trail and that numerous major power transmission lines, as well as a number of natural gas pipelines under Commission jurisdiction, cross the trail. Presumably, these facilities would not conflict with the proposed national trail designation.

The draft environmental statement notes that additional power transmission line and pipeline crossings of the proposed national trail would conflict with some segments of the route. The statement suggests that, while trail designation would force decision makers to give additional consideration to the impact on the trail, development of additional transmission line or pipeline corridors would not necessarily be precluded. In some instances, however, proposed facilities might have to be located so as to avoid disruption of critical historic areas. The staff notes that, in many cases, it should be possible to construct such facilities so that through treatment measures, such as landscaping and design of structures, their impact on the trail experience would be minimized.

According to the draft environmental statement, the trail route crosses significant undeveloped organic fuel deposits (oil and gas fields, coal fields, and oil shale beds). No mineral extraction of these deposits along the route is being done at this time. Any extraction proposals would be carefully weighed as they relate to historic and recreational uses.

Based on its consideration of your Department's proposed report on the Oregon Trail study, the associated draft environmental impact statement, and the studies of its own staff, the Commission concludes that there are a number of existing electric power generating plants, transmission lines, and natural gas pipelines located along or crossing the proposed national trail, and that these facilities presumably would not conflict with the national trail designation. Undeveloped hydroelectric projects along the trail and future power transmission lines and natural gas pipelines crossing the trail presumably would not be precluded, but some might need to be located so as to minimize their impact on the trail's environment.

Sincerely yours,

Richard L. Dunham

Richard L. Dunham
Chairman

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