

Visitor Interpretive Experience Plan



National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center

October 8, 2024

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For the

National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center

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Definitions

Understanding the following terms will be useful in understanding this document:

- Visitor Interpretive Experience Plan
- Interpretive Program or Network
- Extended Opportunities
- Message (theme)
- Visitors
- Priority Audiences
- Nature

Visitor Interpretive Experience Plan

Visitors today buy *experiences* with their time. Information, in the form of trip planning, orientation and wayfinding information, is critical to supporting those experiences. Interpretation is not. It is an optional part of a visitor experience. Consequently, the desired product to guide development of an interpretive program is a Visitor Interpretive *Experience* Plan (VIEP), which uses desired visitor experiences as the frameworks for determining the interpretive, orientation, wayfinding, and trip planning information to develop and actions to take to facilitate experiences that will attract, hold and communicate effectively with target audiences, whether on or off-site.

Using a visitor experience approach ensures that the plan contains a complete information network that begins with reaching your target audiences where they are – physically, emotionally and intellectually – and taking them where you want them to go by using a linked combination of trip planning information, orientation, wayfinding and interpretive opportunities. It also ensures that you identify barriers to the desired experiences, such as facilities that are not fully accessible, so you can address those barriers within the context of developing your interpretive program, thus increasing the probability the visitors can access and engage with the information.

Interpretive Program or Network

This refers to all the interpretive opportunities offered by the NHOTIC as opposed to just an evening ‘program.’ Interpretive opportunities include interpretive signs, exhibits, videos, presentations, etc.

Extended Learning Opportunities

These are opportunities for a visitor to learn more about a topic presented in the Interpretive Program at NHOTIC. They include books, films, other sites, etc. In this case, a visit to the Baker Heritage Museum would be considered an Extended Learning Opportunity. These opportunities are important and should be marketed in the Interpretive Center because the purpose of interpretation is not to educate – that is not possible in a short visit – but rather to inspire visitors to get educated about a particular topic. Extended Learning Opportunities are a part of that educational process.

Message (Theme)

The interpretive profession adopted the term ‘theme’ to indicate the set of ‘points,’ or ‘messages’ to be communicated in interpretive opportunities. Unfortunately, most people use ‘theme’ and ‘topic’ synonymously. Consequently, many people reading Interpretive Plans of any type do not understand what is meant when the term ‘theme’ is used. Therefore, the term ‘message’ is used instead of the term ‘theme’ as an attempt to provide clarity.

Visitors

The term ‘visitor’ in this document is applied to anyone engaging with an interpretive opportunity that is a part of the network of interpretive opportunities being developed, such as the website. In other words, it includes ‘virtual visitors.’

Priority Audiences

Priority Audiences are those who need to be reached to accomplish the Primary Goals for the project. They do not always include everyone who is already visiting and may include segments that are not visiting. Priority audiences for this project are listed in the section entitled, ‘Priority Audience Profiles.’ Note that just because the visitor interpretive experiences are going to be designed to ensure that the Priority Audiences will choose to engage and will be able to process the information does not mean that others will not enjoy the exhibits.

Nature

The term ‘nature’ in this document refers to native flora and fauna unless otherwise defined.

Executive Summary

The Visitor Interpretive Experience Plan for the National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center (NHOTIC) near Baker City, Oregon, identifies the information network – including interpretive opportunities – to develop, infrastructure to modify and other actions to be taken to upgrade visitor interpretive experiences at NHOTIC that motivate visitors to stay longer in the area, motivate them to learn more about the Oregon Trail and its role in the history of the West and the people who inhabited the area at the time, and help make progress towards the overall Management Goals. The following is a brief overview of the goals, messages, priority audiences, key factors, and primary recommendations in this plan.

Goals

The direction for the plan – the Interpretive Program Goals – were established from the Mission and Management Goals for NHOTIC. Those parts of the Goal Hierarchy are as follows:

Mission

“The National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center at Flagstaff Hill portrays and interprets the Oregon Trail experience and its related themes, while preserving and protecting its historic, cultural heritage, natural, and visual features. The Center serves as a focal point for the cultural heritage traveler, contributes a viable tourism industry for the area, and is committed to maintaining strong community partnerships.”

This addresses both a major goal of Public Land Management agencies, which is to protect the remaining remnants of trail and the features associated with the Oregon Trail, and a major goal of Baker City, which is increased use of the area, which should directly translate into visitors staying longer in the area, leading to an increased revenue stream.

Working Management Goals

No Management Goals exist for NHOTIC. The following are working management goals used to help guide the project. These goals are consistent with the purposes of the Oregon National Historic Trail identified in the 2010 Oregon, California, Mormon Pioneer, and Pony Express National Historic Trails Long-Range Interpretive Plan (NPS) on page 2 of the Planning Foundation, which are to:

- *Identify, preserve, and interpret the sites, route, and history of the Oregon Trail for all people to experience and understand.*
 - *Recognize the westward movement of emigrants to the Oregon country as an important chapter of our national heritage.*
1. Help protect the cultural resources in areas managed by the BLM.
 2. Increase visitation to the area and help retain visitors for more than just the time necessary to visit the NHOTIC (this helps provide social and economic benefits to local residents and businesses).

3. Increase positive relationships with local stakeholders. This can be accomplished in part by achieving Goal 2, but also by providing recreational, interpretive, educational, and employment opportunities specifically for local residents.
4. Increase positive relationships with local Native American tribes. This entails working with those groups to ensure that the interpretation is accurate.

Interpretive Program Goals

The Mission and Management Goals were used to develop the following set of Interpretive Program Goals, which provide specific direction for the visitor experience:

- **Interpretive Program Goal 1:** Increased level of stewardship of cultural resources on the part of visitors.
- **Interpretive Program Goal 2:** Increased level of respect for Native Americans and manifestation of that respect in positive behavior toward Native Americans.
- **Interpretive Program Goal 3:** Increased level of support for NHOTIC by the local community.
- **Interpretive Program Goal 4:** All visitors will feel welcome to NHOTIC.

Priority Audiences

Priority audiences are ones that potentially have the greatest impact on achieving Management Goals. Based on Goal Hierarchy established for this project, review of existing information, and discussions with NHOTIC personnel and stakeholders, the priority audiences include the following: Note that overlap exists, such as families who are residents. However, each category has specific characteristics that affect the design of the visitor experience and the interpretive elements.

- **Local and Regional Residents**
- **Experiential Travelers**
- **Heritage Travelers (also often called 'Cultural Travelers')**
- **Families**
- **Children**

Within each of those groups are the more typical audience segments – families, the elderly, those with physical limitations, groups of friends (of any age), etc.

Key Factors

The following are the most significant factors (parameters) that affected recommendations in this plan:

- **Budget for implementation will be limited.** Given the need to replace the entire set of primary exhibits at the same time, it may be a while before this can happen.
- **Staffing is limited.** The basic visitor experience must be available using non-personal information delivery strategies.
- **A new Friends Group has recently been formed.** This creates the opportunity to have a Gift Store and provide some programming.

- **Theft is always an issue if authentic artifacts are displayed to the public.** Actual artifacts will not be used.
- **The building has a large window with a view of the Blue Mountains, Baker City and Baker Valley that is on the SW end of the building.** Interpretation at this point has to focus on the visuals, which include the Baker Valley. If the main exhibit is a 'journey on the Oregon Trail, 'more space is needed prior to reaching the windows to provide a reasonable amount of information regarding the trail experience before reaching Baker Valley.
- **Sound migration is an issue in the current building (unconfined area).** Either audio elements should be eliminated, directional speakers used, or additional sound-dampening strategies added.
- **There are no food or snacks available.** This information should be available on the website to attempt to create expectations in line with what is offered.
- **The Encampment is too exposed.** The area where the Encampment is located can be very hot in the summer and is exposed to high winds, so to be effective, it needs to be moved.
- **The Amphitheater is too exposed.** To be most effective, the amphitheater needs to be moved so participants attending programs in the afternoon do not face directly into the sun.
- **Visitors are at some degree of risk from weather hazards, such as hot weather increasing the potential for heat exhaustion, heat stroke and dehydration.** Visitors need to be aware of these hazards no matter how they access the site.
- **The site has an interpretive trail with a gold stamp mill and replica lode mine on the short loop.** These features need to be eliminated or interpreted within the context of the Oregon Trail Story.
- **The site has a gold panning demonstration area, which is a chokepoint along the interpretive trail.** This opportunity should be moved to avoid issues with blocking the interpretive trail.
- **The site has no exterior restrooms.** This is an issue, particularly for use when the Interpretive Center is closed.
- **Visitors will not encounter ruts on the interpretive trail unless they walk all the way to the bottom of the hill or stop at the pullout on Highway 86.** This is an important visual. Given the distance from the Center on the trail system, visitors should be made aware of the stop along Highway 86. This could necessitate replacing the panel at the trailhead, so it focuses on the Oregon Trail, not the lure of gold.
- **Parking areas are not well-labeled. Not clear that only compact cars work well at the top. Buses need directional information before they get stuck where there is no room to turn around (wayfinding information an issue).** Upgrading the wayfinding system needs to be a high priority to increase the probability that visitors will have a positive experience.
- **The Interpretive Center is located five miles from Baker City and a mile off Interstate 84. LA-4.** Given the desire to motivate visitors to explore the area around Baker City, it is important to market experiences in the nearby area.
- **Baker City contains the Baker Heritage Museum, a place where visitors can learn more about the story.** Visitors should be motivated to visit the museum.
- **The Tamástslikt Cultural Institute (near Pendleton) focuses on the impact of settlement of EuroAmericans on the Native Americans and their culture.** NHOTIC should focus on introducing visitors to the stories associated with Native Americans with the goal of motivating them to visit the Cultural Institute rather than duplicating what is there.

Messaging

Introduction

To avoid the information-driven or ‘encyclopedic’ approach to the interpretive opportunities, which has been determined to be ineffective, this plan uses a message-driven approach. Messages can be thought of the key points you want to make or the ‘take-aways.’

The story can be separated into the following key focal points:

1. **Factors that motivated people to travel West on the Oregon Trail.** This part of the story will put the migration on the Oregon Trail in the context of the nation and the world at that time, with a focus on the socio-economic and political factors that motivated people to emigrate on the Oregon Trail. It will encompass the variety of people who embarked on the journey and the array of reasons for making the journey.
2. **The journey.** This part of the story encompasses the hardships faced by travelers and the interactions with Native Americans, both positive and negative along the way.
3. **The impacts of the mass migration of people arriving via the Oregon Trail.** This includes the impact on Native Americans in Oregon and Washington and along the route, the impact on the United States as a whole, the impact on Oregon and the western states, and the impact on the local area. It includes both the immediate impacts and the long-term impacts.

The following are the messages to be communicated in the Interpretive Program. Sub-messages and supporting stories for each message, which can be found in the section on messages, provide the fodder for the Interpretive Network.

Primary Message 1: The socio-economic and political climate of the time period spurred people to decide to head West on the Oregon Trail.

Primary Message 2: The trip was expensive and arduous, possibly more so than people setting out on the trail imagined.

Primary Message 3: The mass migration of people on the Oregon Trail had significant impacts on a national, state, and regional level.

Primary Message 4: The mass migration of emigrants on the Oregon Trail profoundly disrupted traditional Native American lifestyles and heightened cultural conflict between the newcomers and indigenous people in a land already long occupied.

Primary Message 5: Native culture thrives in Oregon.

Key Recommendations

Recommendations are organized by the stage of the visitor experience. This plan covers the Arrival, Primary and Departure stages of a visitor experience at NHOTIC. The following contains the general set of recommendations. Specific information about the strategies can be found in the section entitled ‘Visitor Interpretive Experiences,’ and the one entitled ‘Design Concepts.’

Planning Approach

As noted, this is the 'National Historic Oregon Trail' Interpretive Center rather than a BLM Interpretive Center. With that in mind, the exhibits pertaining to the BLM, and anything not related to the Oregon Trail have been eliminated, and the Oregon Trail story expanded to include the motivations for traveling the trail and the impact of the mass migration of predominantly EuroAmericans into land that was inhabited and used by Native American tribes. Specifically, the story of the GLO and grazing on BLM land were eliminated because they are not a part of the Oregon Trail story. Also, since a major goal is to motivate people to stay in the area, the concept includes components focused on making travelers aware of all the sites and opportunities in the surrounding area where they can learn more about the overall story of the Oregon Trail.

Basic Concept for the Interior

The highest priority for the interior is to identify how fee payment is going to be handled, then install directional signage so it is easy for visitors to find the restrooms and other locations within the building.

The interpretive story was separated into the following areas, as depicted in the flow of the Visitor Experience diagram (figure 1) and where those areas are located in the Interpretive Center (figure 2):

1. **Introduction.** This is an introductory exhibit that provides a brief overview of the trail, the time period and other relevant information so people not familiar with the story have a basis for understanding the rest of the exhibits.
2. **Motivations to Go West.** This focuses on the factors that motivated people to leave everything behind and embark on a perilous journey to start a new life in the West. Who went West is included in the exhibit along with an opportunity for visitors to choose a 'persona' to follow along the route.
3. **Getting Ready.** This is the beginning of the story of travelling West. The exhibits focus on buying supplies, choosing stock to pull the wagons, choosing the type of wagon, packing the wagon, and obtaining information on the route.
4. **The Reality.** This set of exhibits, located in the first section of the 'journey,' focuses on hardships and decisions, such as deaths from disease, lightening the load, finding food and resupplying at forts along the way. This section ends at the South Pass, which was a key to wagon trains being able to make the journey because it was essentially the only way to cross the Rockies.
5. **On to the West.** This focuses on the trail between South Pass and Flagstaff Hill. It includes the issues with river crossings, using crossing the Snake River as the focal point for the story, finding water in an arid environment, trading with the Native Americans (along with other help the Native Americans gave along the way), key resupply points (Fort Bridger, Fort Hall, Fort Boise), and key decision points (junction with the Mormon Trail and junction with the California Trail).
6. **Seeds of Conflict.** This set of exhibits contrasts the Native American way of life, using the Cayuse as the case study, with the way of life the pioneers were envisioning for themselves, as landowners and farmers, with a focus on how the envisioned lifestyle of pioneers interfered significantly with the Native American way of life.
7. **On to the Willamette Valley.** This set of exhibits concludes the journey with exhibits on crossing the Blue Mountains, navigating the route to the Dalles, and getting around Mt. Hood.
8. **Arrival.** These exhibits focus on what settlers had to do after arriving before winter set in.

9. **The Impacts.** This includes impacts on the Native Americans, impacts on the evolution of the United States as we know it today, and impacts on the history of Oregon.
10. **Where are We Now?** This includes an exhibit on Ceded Lands and one of the tribes, notably the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla, and that they are alive and thriving, although there are still remaining issues.

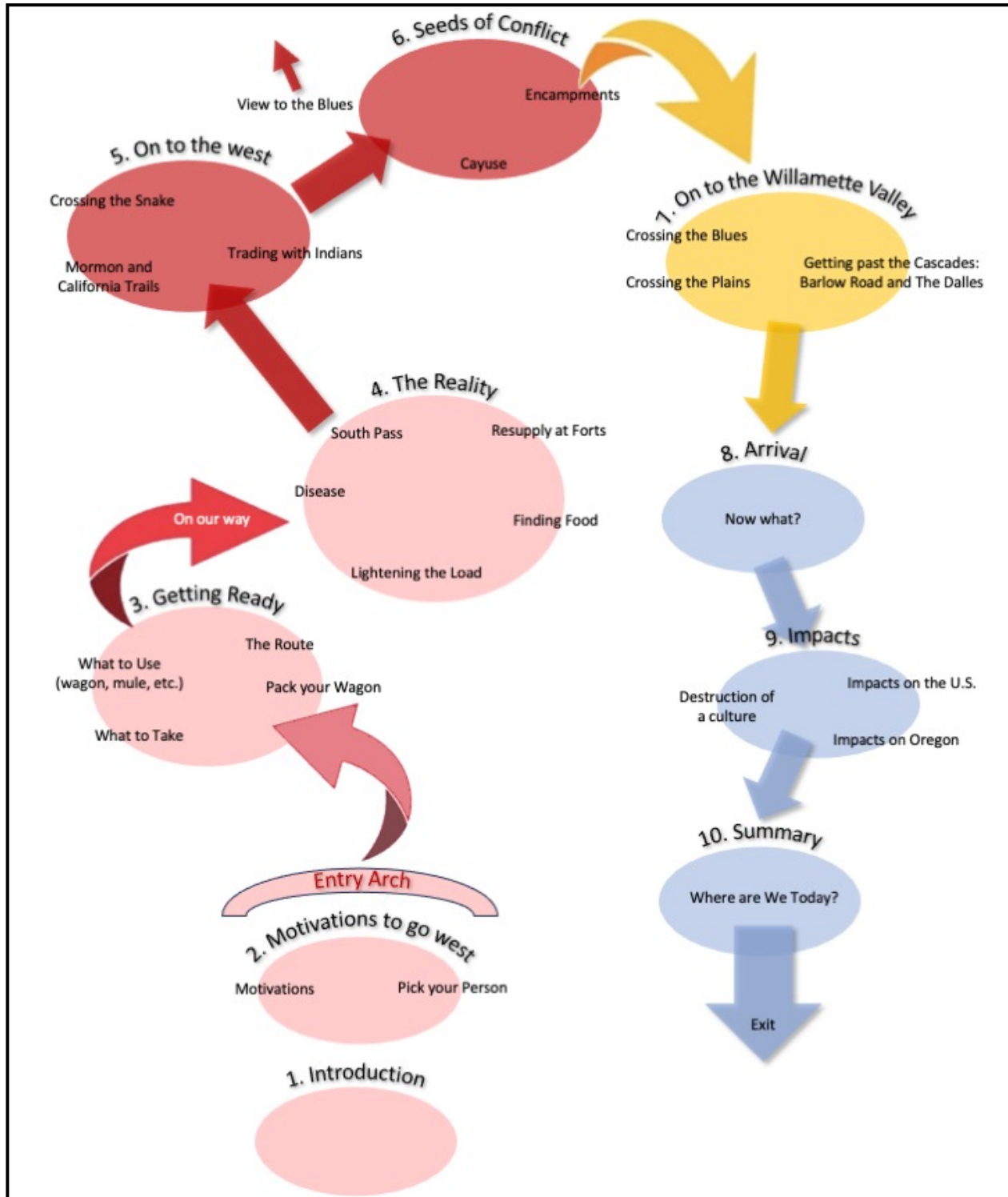


Figure 1: Concept for new Primary Experience

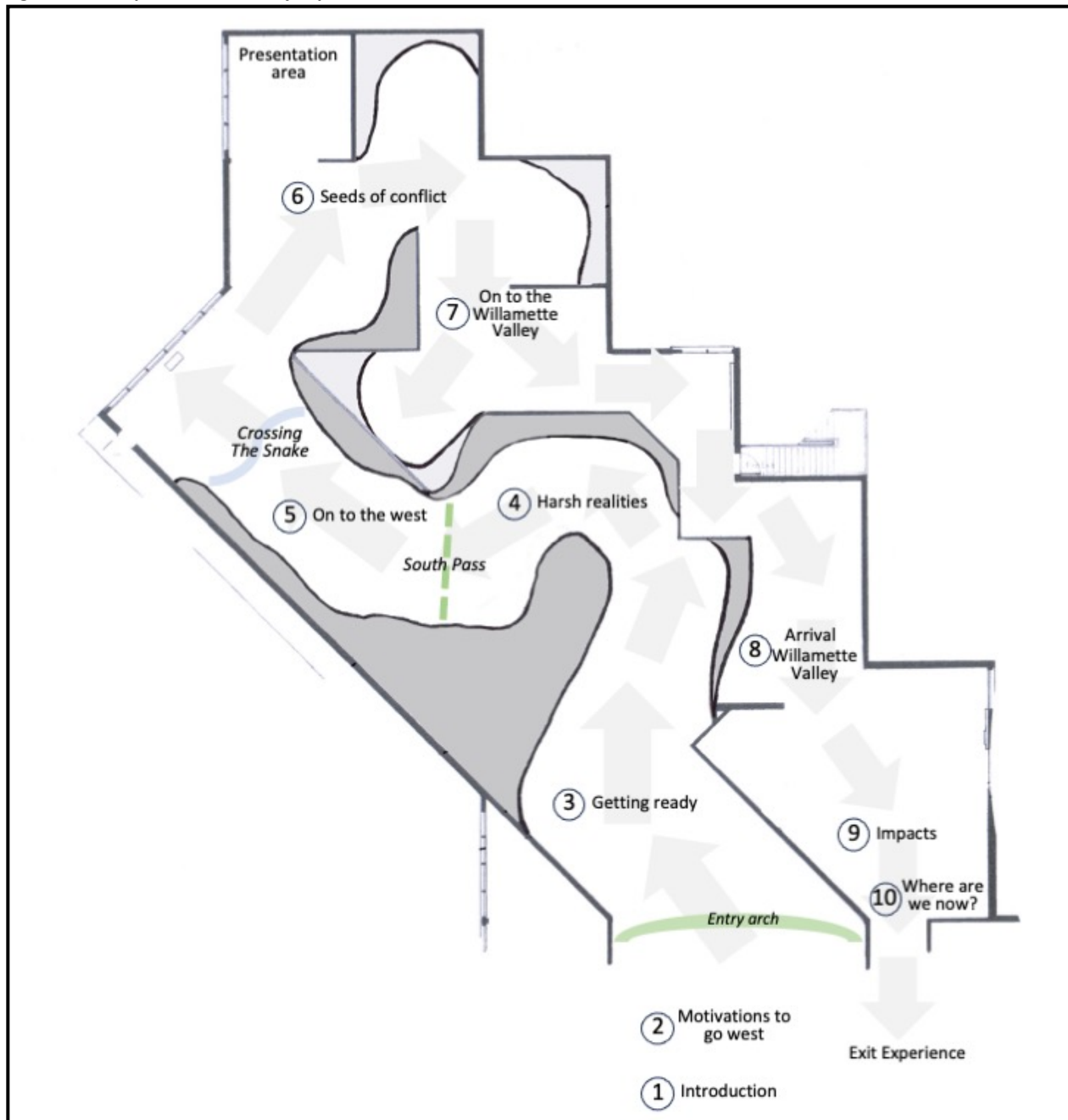


Figure 2: Proposed layout in building

In addition to fixed opportunities, we also recommend creating a Discovery Guide covering experiences within and outside the Interpretive Center.

Basic Concept for the Exterior

From an Orientation and Wayfinding perspective, we recommend installing new signage along Highway 86, new signage at the entry, information kiosks in each parking area, and directional signs as needed.

From an infrastructure perspective, we recommend the following:

- Move the Encampment to the uphill side of Parking Area 3 and set it up to provide non-personal interpretation while maintaining its potential for living history and demonstrations.
- Move the amphitheater to a site overlooking Virtue Flats so visitors at presentations are not looking into the sun, and so the backdrop is more similar to what the area would have looked like when the wagon trains came through.
- Move the gold panning site to somewhere closer to the adit to reduce congestion on the trail and provide a better opportunity to compare the two types of mining for gold.
- Build a fully accessible trail between all parking areas and the building so people do not have to walk in the road.

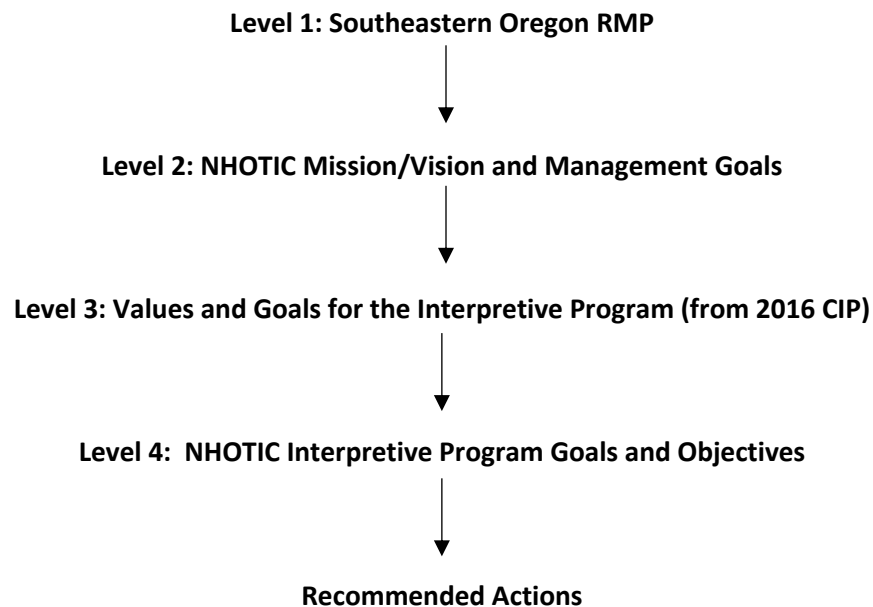
From an interpretive perspective, we recommend the following:

- Remove all signage not relating to the Oregon Trail
- Install interpretive signs at the adit, stamp mill, blacksmith shop, and panning for gold exhibit that relate the feature to the Oregon Trail.
- Add interpretive signage to the Encampment exhibit so it can function as an interpretive opportunity even when not being used for programming.
- Add interpretive signage to the viewpoint and other locations that help tell the story of the Oregon Trail and its impacts.

Goal Hierarchy

Structure

The VIEP takes its direction from the **Management Goals** for the Southeastern Oregon Resource Management Plan (SEORMP) of the BLM, from which the Vision/Mission and Management Goals for NHOTIC are taken. The **Interpretive Objectives** reflect impacts on the behavior, knowledge, and attitude of the target audience, which, if achieved, result in progress toward the **Interpretive Program Goals**. Also included are the Values and Goals for the Interpretive Program that appeared in the 2016 Interpretive Plan because they are still relevant. The **Recommended Actions** include the exhibits and other interpretive opportunities to develop in addition to any other upgrades associated with the visitor experience that as a whole will achieve the Interpretive Objectives. All those elements have been captured in the hierarchical structure depicted below.



The structure of the goal hierarchy reflects several significant points. First, everything stems from the Southeastern Oregon RMP. Second, the statements at each level, whether goals, missions, or vision, are derived from the statements of the level above. Determining each set of statements requires asking the question, “how can this [goal, outcome, mission] help achieve the next level up?” For example, the specific Interpretive Program Goals for the NHOTIC can be determined by asking, “How can an Interpretive Program help achieve the Management Goals?” The connection between all levels provides the planner with tools for identifying each level of goals, and for defending those goals. Finally, the structure clearly shows the link between the purposes for which the Interpretive Center is managed, and the recommended actions associated with developing Visitor Interpretive Experiences.

Level 1: SEORMP Goals

Introduction

Interpretation, as with all products financially supported by an agency, should in some way make progress towards that agency's goals. Consequently, the interpretive planning process begins by using those management goals to derive interpretive program goals by asking the question, "How can an Interpretive Program help achieve this Management Goal or part of the Mission?" The answers become prime candidates for the Interpretive Program goals. This process ties interpretive efforts to overall resource management efforts and helps justify the money spent on interpretation.

In the case of NHOTIC, the relevant management goals should come from the Southeastern Oregon Resource Management Plan. Despite the most recent version being more than 20 years old, several of the management goals are relevant to this project. In addition, several expectations for the center voiced by the Center Director that are included in the 2003 Comprehensive Interpretive Plan appear to reflect larger BLM goals for the District and consequently have also been included in this section.

Relevant Management Goals from the 2002 Southeastern Oregon Resource Management Plan:

The relevant BLM management goals for the Interpretive Center were established in the Southeastern Oregon Management Plan. The most recent version of the plan appears to have been completed in 2002, so the goals may not still be relevant. However, since they are management goals, the relevant goals from that document are included below:

- Manage public land and pursue partnerships to provide social and economic benefits to local residents, businesses, visitors, and future generations.

Applicability: This suggests taking actions that benefit the community in some way, such as increasing tourism by increasing the attraction power of NHOTIC and increasing the holding power of the entire interpretive network, which extends into the surrounding area.

- Provide for the protection and conservation of cultural and paleontological resources. Increase the public's knowledge of, appreciation for, and sensitivity to cultural and paleontological resources. Consult and coordinate with American Indian groups to ensure their interests are considered and their traditional religious sites, landforms and resources are taken into account.

Applicability: This suggests motivating visitors to become better stewards of cultural resources. It also suggests sensitivity to and coordination with the Native American tribes with ties to this area.

2003 NHOTIC Comprehensive Interpretive Plan Goals

The following direction for NHOTIC was taken from the 2003 Comprehensive Interpretive Plan, in which they were labeled 'The Center Director expects interpretation to accomplish the following for NHOTIC.'

- Preserve the integrity of our cultural heritage through accurate interpretation.
- Attract visitors by facilitating an authentic experience of the Oregon Trail.

- Rekindle local interest and support by creating new events and modifying existing ones.
- Provide a balance of personal and non-personal services both indoors and outdoors to meet a variety of visitor interests and needs.
- Develop local and regional support by strengthening mutually beneficial relationships with neighbors and partners.
- Ensure the safety of visitors and staff members at all times.

Working Management Goals for this Plan

Based on these two sets of goals, discussions with staff and review of more recent documents, we recommend that the interpretive program focus on helping achieve the following (not in priority order):

1. Help protect the cultural resources in areas managed by the BLM.
2. Increase visitation to the area and help retain visitors for more than just the time necessary to visit the NHOTIC (this helps provide social and economic benefits to local residents and businesses).
3. Increase positive relationships with local stakeholders. This can be accomplished in part by achieving Goal 2, but also by providing recreational, interpretive, educational, and employment opportunities specifically for local residents.
4. Increase positive relationships with local Native American tribes. This entails working with those groups to ensure that the interpretation is accurate.

Note: *These goals are consistent with the purposes of the Oregon National Historic Trail identified in the 2010 Oregon, California, Mormon Pioneer, and Pony Express National Historic Trails Long-Range Interpretive Plan (NPS) on page 2 of the Planning Foundation, which are to:*

- *Identify, preserve, and interpret the sites, route, and history of the Oregon Trail for all people to experience and understand.*
- *Recognize the westward movement of emigrants to the Oregon country as an important chapter of our national heritage.*

Level 2: NHOTIC Mission/Vision

The following mission was first identified in 1989 and has been retained through all the planning efforts to date:

“The National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center at Flagstaff Hill portrays and interprets the Oregon Trail experience and its related themes, while preserving and protecting its historic, cultural heritage, natural, and visual features. The Center serves as a focal point for the cultural heritage traveler, contributes a viable tourism industry for the area, and is committed to maintaining strong community partnerships.”

Level 3: Values and Goals for Interpretation at NHOTIC (from 2016 plan)

- Integrity and accuracy of interpretation
- Attract visitors with informative and relevant programs that enrich their lives.
- Stay current and interesting by creating new rotating exhibits, workshops, events and modifying existing offerings.
- Balance personal and non-personal service to meet a variety of interests.
- Develop mutually beneficial relationships with partners.
- Ensure safety.

Level 4: Interpretive Program Goals and Objectives

***Note:** The Goals identified in the 2010 Oregon, California, Mormon Pioneer, and Pony Express National Historic Trails Long-Range Interpretive Plan prepared by the NPS are not goals but rather actions to take. Consequently, they were not included in this plan.*

Introduction

Interpretive Program Goals and Objectives focus on the desired impacts and outcomes from the interpretive opportunities that are a key part of Visitor Interpretive Experiences at NHOTIC. Although measurable objectives are preferred, most agencies do not have the time or money to conduct research to ascertain if objectives have been reached. However, indicators of success can often be identified and measured. For example, the objective of increasing visitation at nearby interpretive sites associated with the story as a result of a visitor's experience at the Interpretive Center may be hard to measure if the site is federal because of OMB restrictions on surveys. However, an increase in attendance at such sites after they have been marketed at the Interpretive Center is an indicator that the objective was achieved. If measurement is not possible, potential indicators should be identified. Indicators do not, by themselves, indicate success, but they do provide guidance for what to include in the Interpretive Network.

Interpretive Program Goal 1: Increased level of stewardship of cultural resources on the part of visitors.

Support for Working Management Goals: This directly supports Working Management Goal 1.

Discussion: If something is important to people, they are more likely to take care of it. What an interpretive program can do is increase the value of the experience provided by BLM at NHOTIC and of the story of the Oregon Trail, and also help people understand how cultural resources, and the stories they encapsulate, enhance their quality of life.

Sub-Goal 1-1: Increased level of support for NHOTIC and efforts to preserve the remnants of the Oregon Trail and the story of the Oregon Trail.

Discussion: This sub-goal is achieved by helping meet goals important to stakeholders and visitors. In the case of nearby stakeholders, increasing the attraction and holding power of the area should result in increased tourism, which is a goal important to stakeholders. Consequently, achieving this goal should result in increased support from that group. Support from the local community can also be achieved by offering programs and opportunities they value. Support by other visitors depends on the quality of the experience. Quality experiences of the type offered at NHOTIC often become a part of a person's quality of life in the form of positive memories, in which case those visitors may engage in actions that support NHOTIC, such as donating to the Center.

Objective 1-1a: Significant increase in donations and membership in the Friends Group for NHOTIC and other active support for this facility.

***Note:** A request was made to note the amount of money that needed to be raised through donations/percentage of gift shop receipts to make visiting the facility free of charge. This is not something we can calculate with the information we have.*

Objective 1-1b: Decrease in acts of inadvertent damage to cultural resources on the site and in the area.

Objective 1-1c: Increase in number of visitors who visit another site along their route associated with the story of the Oregon Trail, or who engage in additional information gathering (reading, watching films, etc.) regarding the story. (This directs the experience at the Interpretive Center to make visitors aware of sites north and south along Interstate 84 that contain Extended Learning Opportunities and to make visitors aware of additional Extended Learning Opportunities).

Sub-Goal 1-2: Increase in active stewardship of cultural resources in general after people experience NHOTIC.

Objective 1-2a: Increase in donations and other indicators of active support of cultural institutions in general.

Interpretive Program Goal 2: Increased level of respect for Native Americans and manifestation of that respect in positive behavior toward Native Americans.

Support for Management Goals: This directly supports Working Management Goals 3 and 4.

Discussion: Native Americans are a key part of the story and a key stakeholder. Their story has not always been told and has not always been told accurately. An interpretive program can present the story in such a way as to achieve this Goal, for example by partnering with tribes to offer presentations, which would increase tribal visibility and opportunities for connection while at the same time helping ensure that the story is being told accurately.

Objective 2-1: Increase in percentage of visitors who also visit Tamástslikt Cultural Institute.

Discussion: The purpose of the NHOTIC is to tell the story of the Oregon Trail and its impacts, which include impacts on the Native Americans living in and using this land. That story is theirs to tell. The purpose of integrating stories of the Native Americans in relation to the Oregon Trail within NOTIC is to provide a basic message and motivate visitors to visit Tamástslikt Cultural Institute to gather more detail on the story. In other words, this is a complementary rather than a competing opportunity to Tamástslikt Cultural Institute.

Interpretive Program Goal 3: Increased level of support for NHOTIC by the local community.

Support for Management Goals: This directly supports Working Management Goals 2 and 3.

Discussion: Although this could be considered a part of Sub-Goal 1-1, it is important enough to call it out as a Primary Goal because without the support of the local community, NHOTIC will have a lot of difficulty attaining its other goals.

Objective 3-1: Increase the attraction and holding power of NHOTIC.

Comment: Tourism is based on attraction and holding power of an area. NHOTIC currently contributes to the attraction and holding power of the Baker City area but could do more by making visitors aware of Extended Learning Opportunities in the area.

Objective 3-2: Increase use of the facility and surrounding lands by the local residents.

Comment: This involves offering opportunities that appeal to local residents, changing the offerings periodically to encourage repeat visitation, etc. It also likely means that the plan needs to be updated every 5-10 years to avoid becoming obsolete in terms of a viable experience for the local community. The alternative is to offer a slate of events that continually attracts local residents.

Objective 3-3: Increase the percentage of visitors who visit at least one additional interpretive site in the area.

Comment: Increasing the length of a visitor's stay in the area increases the likelihood that they will at least buy a meal if not spend the night.

Interpretive Program Goal 4: All visitors will feel welcome to NHOTIC.

Discussion: This is an age when supporting equality, inclusivity and diversity is a high priority, and instances of inadvertent racism are identified with frequency. Consequently, it is important for the Interpretive Center to put extra effort into reviewing materials and providing training to avoid instances of inadvertent racism and ensuring that all visitors feel welcome. This also directs the interpretive program to consider providing information in different languages and to consider providing Certified Interpretive Guide (CIG) training to volunteers and visitor services personnel at the Center.

Message Hierarchy

Introduction

Note: *In the interpretive world, a 'theme' is the point you are trying to make, or the message you are trying to communicate, but for the lay person, a 'theme' is synonymous with 'topic.' Therefore, we use the term 'message' instead of theme.*

Previous interpretive plans for NHOTIC focused on six primary 'topics,' which are labeled 'themes' in those documents. They are as follows:

- Migration
- Exploration
- Native Americans
- Mining & Settlement
- Natural History
- GLO/Grazing Service/BLM

The approach taken in this plan is to focus on the fact that this is the National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center rather than a BLM Interpretive Center. Visitors expect information about the Oregon Trail because of the name. That approach provides a clearer lens for viewing potential topics. For example:

- The migration story focuses on migration on the Oregon Trail rather than migration as a whole.
- The Exploration story focuses on the establishment of the Oregon Trail rather than on the larger story of exploring the Pacific Northwest.
- The Native American story focuses on the impact on Native Americans in Oregon and Washington and along the route due to the migration of people on the Oregon Trail rather than on Native Americans in general.
- The Mining and Settlement story focuses on the impact of the discovery of gold in California and Oregon on travel on the Oregon Trail and the subsequent settlement of the Baker Valley due to the 1860 gold strike near Baker City.
- The Natural History story is a minor focus and will be connected to the major stories by focusing on how native plants and wildlife were used to sustain the Native American lifestyle and how impact on those resources by settlers who arrived on the Oregon Trail caused conflict.
- The GLO/Grazing Service/BLM story may not have a place in this Interpretive Center because it does not really connect to the story of the Oregon Trail, other than a connection to the Donation Land Act of 1850.

Primary Interpretive Messages

Introduction

The story can be separated into the following key focal points:

1. **Factors that motivated people to travel West on the Oregon Trail.** This part of the story will put the migration on the Oregon Trail in the context of the nation and the world at that time, with a focus on the socio-economic and political factors that motivated people to emigrate on the Oregon Trail. It will encompass the variety of people who embarked on the journey and the array of reasons for making the journey.
2. **The journey.** This part of the story encompasses the hardships faced by travelers and the interactions with Native Americans, both positive and negative along the way.
3. **The impacts of the mass migration of people arriving via the Oregon Trail.** This includes the impact on Native Americans in Oregon and Washington and along the route, the impact on the United States as a whole, the impact on Oregon and the western states, and the impact on the local area. It includes both the immediate impacts and the long-term impacts.

Those are the three major focal points of the exhibits within which the key Messages and Sub-Messages will be communicated. For example, in telling the story of the journey, emphasis will be on universals (elements of life everyone is familiar with, such as eating, health, clothing, etc.) as a way of connecting with visitors, but those aspects of the journey will be presented to communicate that it was a difficulty journey, which underscores the significance of the factors motivating people to make the journey West, and that the pioneers were hardy, resilient and resourceful – all characteristics necessary for carving out a new life in the West. In other words, the story of the journey will not be encyclopedic, but rather message driven.

The following draft Primary Messages reflect these key parts of the story of the Oregon Trail. Some Sub-Messages and Supporting Stories have been identified to this point, but more are needed.

Messages, Sub-Messages and Examples of Supporting Stories

Primary Message 1: The socio-economic and political climate of the time period spurred people to decide to head West on the Oregon Trail.

Discussion: This message focuses on why people chose to make the trip, which encompasses a variety of reasons, and will include the array of people who used the Oregon Trail over the span of a few decades.

Sub-Message 1-1: Depressions, disease, and high unemployment combined with the promise of free land and the chance for a new life motivated people to make the journey in the initial years of the Oregon Trail (1843-46).

Examples of supporting stories:

- Poor economic conditions and periodic outbreaks of disease in Mississippi caused many to take a chance on emigrating to the West.

- Outbreaks of malaria and yellow fever motivated people, particularly of the lower and middle classes, to head West.
- The Panic of 1837 touched off a major Depression that lasted until the mid-1840s. That Depression motivated many people to head West.

Sub-Message 1-2: Politicians pushed for settlement of the West to extend the power of the United States, citing Manifest Destiny to motivate people to travel west.

Sub-Message 1-3: During the life of the Oregon Trail, events in the East and events in the West both motivated people to head West.

Examples of supporting stories:

- Discovery of gold in California
- Discovery of gold in Colorado
- Discovery of gold Oregon
- Escaping the Civil War (prior to, during and afterwards)

Sub-Message 1-4: A wide variety of people made the journey for a wide variety of reasons.

Examples of supporting stories:

- Missionaries came to convert the Native Americans to their faith.
- Miners came in search of gold.
- Families came in search of a new beginning.
- Farmers came to farm the rich land of the Willamette Valley.
- African Americans (free) came in search of a new life.
- People came to escape the aftermath of the Civil War.
- Some African Americans were forced to come as slaves.

Primary Message 2: The trip was expensive and arduous, possibly more so than people setting out on the trail imagined.

Discussion: The importance of this aspect of the story, aside from telling the story of the journey, which is an expectation on the part of visitors, is that it emphasizes the significance of the forces at play that motivated people to undertake such a life-altering difficult journey, and the resourcefulness, resilience and hardiness of the pioneers.

Examples of supporting stories:

- The important heirlooms discarded along the route.
- The issues with lack of water, lack of food, disease, etc.
- Health was an issue. Disease was the greatest threat on the trail, especially cholera, although diphtheria was the biggest killer of children.
- Pioneers could only carry a limited amount of food and supplies in their wagons, so they had to forage for food along the way, a task that became more difficult as the game along the trail (such as bison) was reduced significantly by previous pioneers.

- Supplies were needed for fixing wagons, mending clothing, repairing or replacing footwear, preparing food, and starting a new life when they reached the West.

Primary Message 3: The mass migration of people on the Oregon Trail had significant impacts on a national, state, and regional level.

Sub-Message 3-1: The settlement of the Oregon Territory by EuroAmericans coming across on the Oregon Trail was directly responsible for it becoming a part of the United States instead of Great Britain.

Discussion: At the time of the first wave of emigrants arriving via the Oregon Trail, the 'ownership' of the Oregon Territory was disputed by the United States and Great Britain. When faced with a choice in 1846, the British agreed to a separation along the 49th parallel in large part because Americans outnumbered the British 6-1 in the Oregon Territory due to the influx of people who arrived during the previous 3 years on the Oregon Trail.

Sub-Message 3-2: The Oregon gold rush in 1861-62 attracted miners to the local area, resulting in the settlement of Baker City and the surrounding area.

Sub-Message 3-3: The influx of settlers on the Oregon Trail and subsequent negative impacts on Native American lifestyle and availability of resources was a key factor in armed conflicts with Native Americans, which eventually led to the removal of Native Americans to reservations.

Sub-Message 3-4: Transportation routes dictate cultural activity and development.

Examples of supporting stories:

- The location of cities and towns along the path of the Oregon Trail
- The importance of finding a realistic wagon route from the East to the West (importance of discovering South Pass in the Rockies).

Primary Message 4: The mass migration of emigrants on the Oregon Trail profoundly disrupted traditional Native American lifestyles and heightened cultural conflict between the newcomers and indigenous people in a land already long occupied.

Potential Sub-Messages include the following:

Sub-Message 4-1: These were not unoccupied, unused, or undeveloped lands.

Sub-Message 4-2: Native Americans were most often an ally, not a hindrance to early wagon trains.

Sub-Message 4-3: The emigrant settlement of Oregon Territory increasingly alarmed native populations and ultimately resulted in conflict that had a profound effect on their lifestyle.

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Sub-Message 4-4: Emigrants had negative impact on resources necessary to sustain Native American lifestyles.

Examples of supporting stories:

- Emigrants on the Oregon Trail put added pressure on vegetation and animals of the Great Plains, causing a decrease in populations of buffalo that many Native Americans, like the Sioux, depended on for survival.
- Wild game, an important part of the diet of Native Americans, became scarce due to the thousands of emigrants traveling the Oregon Trail.

Discussion: This message and sub-messages are included as a placeholder because the message and sub-messages need to be reviewed by the Native American Tribes associated with the area. We need to know if they even want to tell part of their story and if so, what is the key message(s) they want to communicate. The proposed message and sub-messages came from a previous document, which we assume was approved by Native American tribes associated with the area. However, they still need to be reviewed and modified as necessary by those tribes.

Primary Message 5: Native culture thrives in Oregon.

This message is one that many native peoples want to communicate – that their culture is still alive and thriving rather than something of the past. That said, there are still issues, so it will be critical for the designer to work with CTUIR to develop the stories to support this message. It is their story, and they need to have a key role in regard to telling that story.

Note: *This story does not need to be told in a lot of detail. The point is to convey the key message and then motivate visitors to go to the Tamástslikt Cultural Institute for additional information.*

Visitor Interpretive Experience Plan

Introduction

Information Networks to support Visitor Experiences are developed and organized in a way that reflects the stages of a visitor experience, which are as follows:

Stage	Information Needs	Comments
Pre-Trip	Trip promotion information Trip planning information	This is the information on your website
Travel	Orientation and wayfinding information	This consists of what is available on GPS, what visitors can print out before they arrive, maps and signage, including directional signage along the route.
Arrival	On-site wayfinding to parking and facilities; restrooms; map and site-specific trip planning information.	The site needs proper and adequate signage for parking spaces for RVs, cars, and disabled drivers. It also needs adequate signage for the entrance of the Interpretive Center, hours of operation, and after-hours information.
Primary	Interpretive information	These are the interpretive opportunities such as the exhibits.
*Departure	Restrooms and directions to other sites to visit.	This is the point at which they are most likely to purchase items, donate money, etc.
Extended Learning Opportunities	Information on other opportunities and wayfinding information to those opportunities.	Market interpretive opportunities associated with the story, especially ones that are nearby.
Return Travel	Orientation and wayfinding	Information to get back to Interstate 84 and to make it easy for them to explore Baker City and the surrounding area.
Post Trip	Follow-up information on the stories that offer more depth and detail.	Ideally, you will have obtained email address so you can keep visitors apprised of upcoming events, work parties, programs, etc.

**This experience has two major Departure Experiences – departure from the building and departure from the site (for those people engaging in any of the exterior interpretive opportunities).*

This contract only covers the **Arrival, Primary and Departure Experiences** as they relate to the facility and site. However, suggestions for information strategies necessary to support the other stages of the experience will be noted when possible.

Guidelines

In addition to the stages of a typical Visitor Experience, the following key guidelines were used to help develop recommendations:

1. The approach is based on the site and facility to be the National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center, so all interpretive opportunities will relate to that topic.

2. The intent of the interpretive opportunities in the NHOTIC is not to educate visitors on the topic, but to pique their interest to the point they are motivated to engage in Extended Learning Opportunities, such as publications, websites, other interpretive sites, etc., to find out more about the Oregon Trail and its impacts, and ideally, to spend time exploring the surrounding area to learn more.
3. Interpretive opportunities were selected and conceptualized to communicate the messages in the Message Hierarchy by communicating the supporting stories.
4. The plan reflects a phased approach with a pathway of doable steps.

Arrival Experience

Current Arrival Experience

Visitors currently are directed to NHOTIC by signage on Interstate 84 and signage at the entry road. Along the route between the Interstate and access road they pass an interpretive sign entitled 'The Lone Tree of the Oregon Trail,' a monument to the trail, and a parking area with an interpretive panel entitled 'The Lure of Gold.' Behind the 'Lure of Gold' panel is a small panel identifying an access trail to ruts from the Oregon Trail.

Soon after turning on the access road to NHOTIC, they encounter a large panel about the Interpretive Center, which notes opportunities, such as living history, which are currently no longer available. Visitors then proceed up the hill to the potential entry points to the different parking areas.

Visitors park in one of three parking areas, proceed to the building and enter the building through the right set of double doors, where they pay their fee. They can easily locate the exhibit area, and an Information Desk, and will probably note the location of the Theater and Gallery as they scan for restrooms.

Issues with Current Arrival Experience

- Lack of signage to alert travelers to the upcoming turn off of Highway 86 to NHOTIC may cause visitors to inadvertently pass the entry road or slow down suddenly to make the turn, thus creating a safety hazard.
- The sign near the entry identifies visitor opportunities that are no longer there, such as living history. Putting such information on a sign is a liability because it has to be changed every time an opportunity is eliminated to avoid creating false expectations.
- Buses and larger vehicles who follow the access road all the way up to the Encampment encounter issues due to the lack of turnaround space.
- Lack of trails from parking areas force visitors to walk in road.
- Upon entering the building, lack of adequate signage makes it difficult to determine the location of the restrooms.
- Given the current location of the fee station at the facility, the lines for visitors to pay may be backed up into areas exposed to weather.

New Arrival Experience

Visitors are directed to the NHOTIC by signs on Interstate 84 and along Highway 86 (including signage that makes travelers aware of the approaching turn to the center, regardless of the direction they are coming). A new Welcome Sign located just after turning on the access road provides reinforcement that the visitor has arrived at NHOTIC. On the way up the access road, visitors encounter a sign noting the direction of the Amphitheater and Encampment (both in the area that was formerly the lowest parking area), and another sign further along the route stating that buses and other large vehicles may not enter beyond a specific point, thus preventing issues with turning around. A kiosk in each parking area makes it clear to visitors where to go next to reach the interpretive center and the interpretive trail. Trails connect every parking area to the Interpretive Center, so visitors do not have to walk in the road.

Note: *The configuration for the entry to the building is still to be determined. Consequently, the description of the Arrival Experience focuses on additional signage needed so visitors can easily orient themselves and perhaps most importantly, find the restrooms easily.*

Visitors exit their vehicles and are drawn to a kiosk located along the pathway to the Visitor Center (one kiosk per parking area). The kiosk provides a map with a 'You are Here,' and directions to the Interpretive Center, Amphitheater, Encampment, and Interpretive Trail. Visitors take the trail linking the parking area to the entry walkway and enter the building through the first set of right-hand doors. They are funneled past the fee station. Upon exiting the fee station, they have clear visual access to the following:

- The Flagstaff Gallery and a Sandwich Board identifying the exhibit currently being displayed or the activity being offered in that space.
- The Leo Adler Theater with the same Sandwich Board providing information on the schedule of videos and presentations for that day.
- A staffed information counter where they can ask questions and pick up brochures and other information that will help them explore the surrounding area. (This is located to help block the hallway to the staff offices.)
- A Self-Serve Orientation Area.
- Overhead signage directing them to the restrooms, Café, and Gift Store.
- The primary exhibit area.
- The Gift Store.

They can use the restrooms, get food, shop in the Gift Store, gather information at the information desk, view the special exhibit in the Gallery, watch a video or attend a program in the Theater, or head into the primary exhibit area. The latter is identified by an architectural feature, such as an arch, which signifies entry into a different space in the building (and a different era).

Actions to facilitate the New Arrival Experience

- Add signage on Highway 86 indicating that the turn to the Center is ahead from both directions (this will require working with ODOT).
- Remove the existing panel about NHOTIC that is located near the entry and replace it with a Welcome sign.
- Add signage along the vehicular access route noting the direction to the amphitheater and Encampment. Note that the lower parking area must now be closed off to avoid mixing pedestrians with vehicles, which is a safety issue.
- Add signage directing buses and larger vehicles to turn off into one of the first two parking areas instead of following the access road to the Encampment.
- Add information kiosks at the intersection of the access pathway and each parking area.
- Create fully accessible trails linking each parking area to the facility.
- Put a Sandwich Board outside the Flagstaff Gallery and Leo Adler Theater identifying the opportunities within, including the schedule in the Theater.
- Add new directional signage in line-of-sight for visitors exiting the fee station that directs them to the restrooms and other attractions that are not in their field of vision.
- Move the information desk to a location just after visitors pay their fee and remove the old information desk infrastructure.
- Add an architectural feature, such as an arch, spanning the entry into the primary exhibit area.

Primary Experience

Current Primary Experience: Interpretive Center (see Figure 3)

Upon entering the building, visitors immediately encounter a diorama, complete with sound, depicting a wagon on the Oregon Trail. Along the first part of the exhibit experience they encounter more wagons, artificial 'ruts' on the floor, and interpretive information focusing on different aspects of the journey. That section ends at the windows overlooking Baker Valley.

The next part of the exhibit area, beginning just to the right of the windows (as you face them), includes an opportunity to 'pack your wagon,' a Program Area for presentations, and an exhibit focusing on the building of an empire. Visitors then move into a section characterized by partitions that create a winding pathway and a sense of mystery regarding what is 'around the next corner.' The stories told along the way focus on different aspects of the journey and also reflect the progression along the trail and the obstacles encountered, such as crossing the Snake, seeing the Blues, crossing the Blues, reaching the Dalles and finally arriving in the Willamette Valley. Interpretive opportunities are often located on the partitions in narrow passageways, which can create congestion, and in larger spaces along the way.

Exhibits in those larger spaces include the following:

- 'The Train is Leaving' audiovisual presentation in an alcove with seating.
- A diorama depicting a Trading Camp with an interchange between Native Americans and people journeying along the trail.
- A diorama of an encampment with a wagon designed to provide the opportunity to do living history.
- 'Fanning Out' audiovisual presentation in another alcove with seating.
- A set of exhibits focusing on the Baker Valley.
- An exhibit focusing on the impact on Native Americans.
- An exhibit on the GLO and BLM.

Visitors exit the exhibit area back into the lobby, and are in proximity to an Information Desk, where they can obtain information about other attractions in the area and along the route.

Issues with Current Primary Experience

- Issues with congestion along narrow corridors on the backside of the diorama with interpretive information on both sides, and in the alcoves, can result in a less-than-ideal experience.
- Several elements are 'out of sequence,' such as packing your wagon when you have already started your journey on the Oregon Trail and encountering the exhibit on Baker Valley after having arrived in the Willamette Valley and ended your journey.
- The artificial ruts on the floor are an issue for the elderly due to worry about balance, and an issue for people in wheelchairs.
- Noise from exhibits with audio elements and audiovisual presentations migrates throughout the Exhibit Hall.
- Exhibits as a whole focus primarily on a EuroAmerican-centric perspective of the impact of the mass migration to the area.
- Lack of significant integration of stories of people impacted by the mass migration along the trail (Native Americans).

-

Figure 3: Current Exhibit Layout

New Primary Experience: Interpretive Center

Approach

As noted, this is the 'National Historic Oregon Trail' Interpretive Center rather than a BLM Interpretive Center. With that in mind, the exhibits pertaining to the BLM, and anything not related to the Oregon Trail have been eliminated, and the Oregon Trail story expanded to include the motivations for traveling the trail and the impact of the mass migration of predominantly EuroAmericans into land that was inhabited and used by Native American tribes. Specifically, the story of the GLO and grazing on BLM land were eliminated because they are not a part of the Oregon Trail story. Also, since a major goal is to motivate people to stay in the area, the concept includes components focused on making travelers aware of all the sites and opportunities where they can learn more about the overall story of the Oregon Trail and its impacts in the surrounding area.

Basic Concept

The story was separated into the following areas, as depicted in the flow of the Visitor Experience diagram (figure 4) and where those areas are located in the Interpretive Center (figure 3):

1. **Introduction.** This is an introductory exhibit that provides a brief overview of the trail, the time period and other relevant information so people not familiar with the story have a basis for understanding the rest of the exhibits.
2. **Motivations to Go West.** This focuses on the factors that motivated people to leave everything behind and embark on a perilous journey to start a new life in the West. Who went West is included in the exhibit along with an opportunity for visitors to choose a 'persona' to follow along the route.
3. **Getting Ready.** This is the beginning of the story of travelling West. The exhibits focus on buying supplies, choosing stock to pull the wagons, choosing the type of wagon, packing the wagon, and obtaining information on the route.
4. **The Reality.** This set of exhibits, located in the first section of the 'journey,' focuses on hardships and decisions, such as deaths from disease, lightening the load, finding food and resupplying at forts along the way. This section ends at the South Pass, which was a key to wagon trains being able to make the journey because it was essentially the only way to cross the Rockies.
5. **On to the West.** This focuses on the trail between South Pass and Flagstaff Hill. It includes the issues with river crossings, using crossing the Snake River as the focal point for the story, finding water in an arid environment, trading with the Native Americans (along with other help the Native Americans gave along the way), key resupply points (Fort Bridger, Fort Hall, Fort Boise), and key decision points (junction with the Mormon Trail and junction with the California Trail).
6. **Seeds of Conflict.** This set of exhibits contrasts the Native American way of life, using the Cayuse as the case study, with the way of life the pioneers were envisioning for themselves, as landowners and farmers, with a focus on how the envisioned lifestyle of pioneers interfered significantly with the Native American way of life.
7. **On to the Willamette Valley.** This set of exhibits concludes the journey with exhibits on crossing the Blue Mountains, navigating the route to the Dalles, and getting around Mt. Hood.
8. **Arrival.** These exhibits focus on what settlers had to do after arriving before winter set in.
9. **The Impacts.** This includes impacts on the Native Americans, impacts on the evolution of the United States as we know it today, and impacts on the history of Oregon.

10. **Where are We Now?** This includes an exhibit on Ceded Lands and one of the tribes, notably the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla, and that they are alive and thriving, although there are still remaining issues.



Figure 4: Concept for new Primary Experience

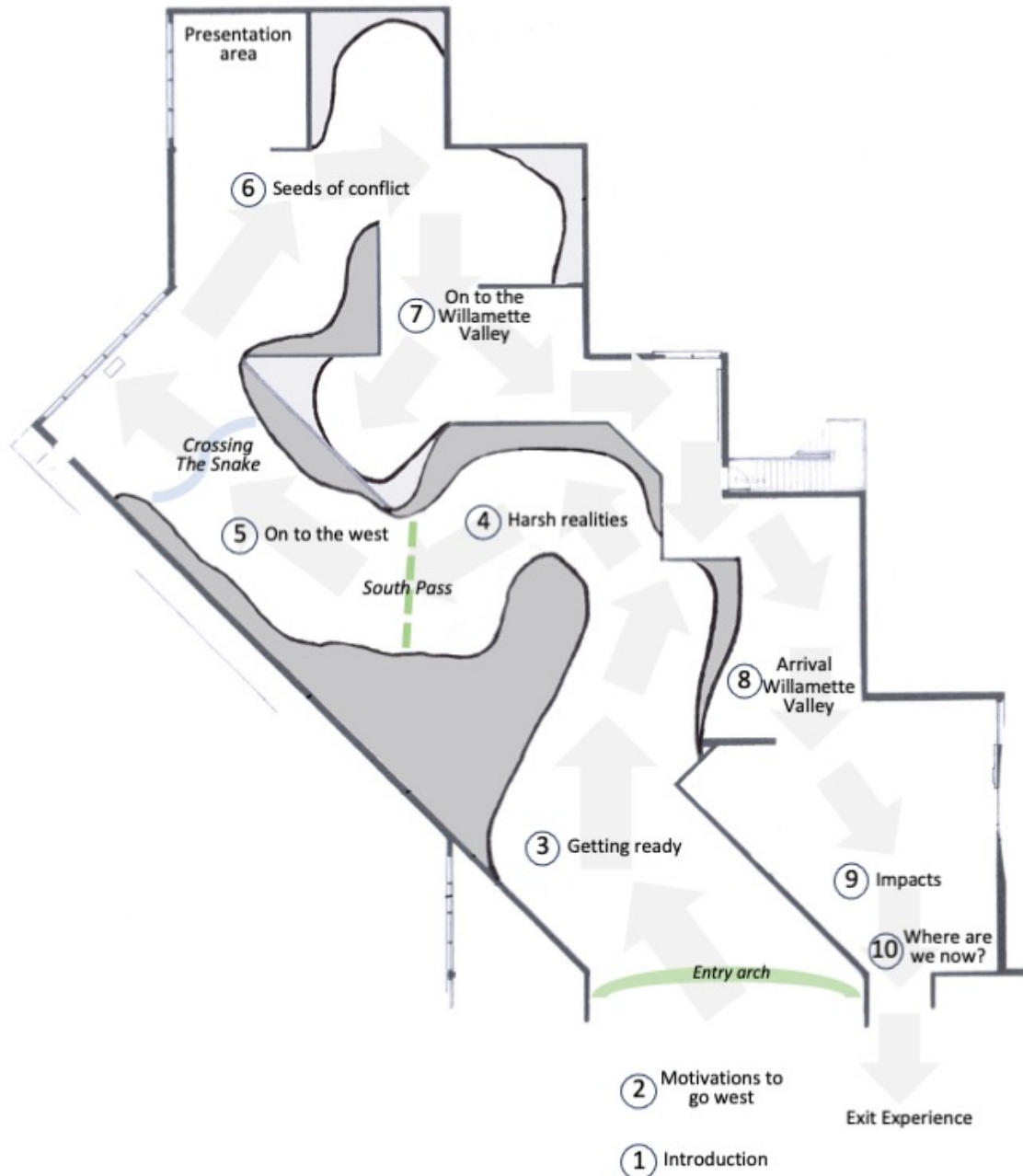


Figure 5: Proposed layout in building

Experience

Area 1: Introduction

This introductory exhibit depicts the route of the Oregon Trail, complete with landmarks, overlain with the general boundaries of tribal lands to emphasize that this was not unused or uninhabited land they were going through or to. Note that the boundaries of tribal lands were in constant flux. However, simply depicting a representative of a particular tribe in the heartland of that tribe could help communicate the concept. Along the route visitors will have the opportunity to hear the story of the

Oregon Trail from the perspective of those tribes. The exhibit also notes that the emigration on the Oregon Trail is the largest mass migration in human history (with significant consequences), and that it is an arduous journey of more than 2000 miles with countless hardships and obstacles. It then invites visitors to 'experience' the journey.

Area 2: Motivations to Go

This exhibit focuses on the forces that caused people to pack up belongings, leave friends and family behind, and travel West on the Oregon Trail to start a new life. For some it was the lack of jobs and opportunities caused by the economic depression. For some it was the lack of land. For others it was to escape. The socioeconomic conditions and the 'marketing' of the Oregon Country by returning missionaries and other sources of information were key factors in motivating people to head West. Within the context of this exhibit, visitors are given the opportunity to adopt a 'persona' that they can follow through the exhibits such as a child, an elderly person, a Black pioneer (this could be a free person of color escaping persecution in the south, a free person of color seeking a new life and/or a slave of a family traveling west), a pregnant woman, a blacksmith, a gold seeker, etc. All along the route they have opportunities to hear the story from the perspective of that person.

Area 3: Getting Ready

The next stop is a set of interpretive opportunities focusing on getting ready for the journey. The centerpiece is a 'pack your wagon' interactive opportunity. Along the left side of the exhibit space is a partial diorama of a Mercantile, a blacksmith, and a stockyard. Interpretive opportunities in the Mercantile focus on what pioneers had to take with them. Interpretive opportunities in the stockyard consider the pros and cons of horses, mules, and oxen for pulling the wagons. Interpretive opportunities associated with the blacksmith highlight the skills needed during the journey after emigrants arrived in Oregon. This is the first place the visitors can obtain information from the perspective of the traveler they selected.

The final interpretive opportunity visitors encounter is a map similar to what was available at that time, showing the route and landmarks along the way, such as Forts and natural features. Landmarks were a key fixture of the route and helped pioneers understand where they were along the journey. Those landmarks will show up along the route and will be a key component of the 'Visual Scavenger Hunt' for children. The idea that the Oregon Trail was not necessarily a specific route, but rather it involved numerous interweaving trails that all followed the same general route will be included. In addition, other publications available to travelers to help them on their journey will be included.

Area 4: Harsh Reality

This set of exhibits corresponds with the first part of the journey, from Independence, Missouri to South Pass. Given that Baker Valley is encountered during the latter part of the journey, it is necessary to create more 'trail' prior to reaching the windows. To do so the 'route' in the first section becomes more curvilinear (see figure 3). Location-based exhibits along the way include the following:

Note: *That is not a complete list of the components encountered along this trail section. It is a partial list to indicate how landmarks, Native American lands, and hardships encountered by pioneers are interwoven into the story.*

- **Disease and Death.** This could use the Platte River as the point on the trail for this exhibit because it was there and similar locations where travelers camped that outbreaks of cholera occurred because of so much human waste from pioneers. It would also include other diseases encountered, noting that disease was the number one killer of people on the trail.
- **Lightening the Load.** This focuses on what travelers dumped along the route, including heirlooms, to lighten the load.
- **Finding Food.** This notes that pioneers typically hunted along the way, and also traded with Indians for food.
- **Resupplying at Forts.** This would include Fort Kearney, Fort McPherson, Fort Laramie, and Fort Casper.
- **South Pass.** This focuses on South Pass as a key to taking a wagon across the Rockies.

In addition to the forts, landmarks along the route include Courthouse Rock, Chimney Rock, Scotts Bluff, and Independence Rock.

Area 5: On To the West

This area covers the trail section from South Pass to Flagstaff Hill. Key exhibits in the area include the following:

- **A Decision.** This component focuses on the importance of Fort Bridger and the decision to take the Mormon Trail or the Oregon Trail.
- **Support along the Way.** This exhibit focuses on all the ways Native Americans helped the pioneers, by trading, guiding, helping stock get across rivers etc.
- **Crossing the Snake.** This will focus on the issue of crossing rivers along the way in general, and specifically, the issue of crossing the Snake River. Three Island Crossing will be used to illustrate the issues.
- **View of the Blues.** This exhibit is located where the visitor can look out the large window facing Baker Valley.

In addition to Fort Bridger, landmarks along the route include Fort Hall, Fort Boise, junction with the Mormon Trail, junction with the California Trail, and Farewell Bend.

Area 6: Seeds of Conflict

The exhibits in this area use the Cayuse to highlight the lifestyle of the tribes along the route with emphasis on the importance of access to all the resources in their tribal land, and contrasts that with the lifestyle of the newcomers, who were farmers who wanted to settle on fertile lands and farm them, thus removing them from tribal use. Specific exhibits include the following:

- ***Not uninhabited or unused.** This exhibit focuses on the Cayuse as an example of the relationship with the newcomers over time. Initially they often traded with the newcomers, helped get stock across rivers, etc., but later became concerned about the numbers of people coming to the area. It will contrast their lifestyle, which is based on having access to all resources on their tribal lands, and the lifestyle of the newcomers, which often involved restricting access to some of the best land by fencing it off, and also using the same resources the Cayuse depended on to sustain their lifestyle and culture. Note that the Cayuse are the

focus at this point on the 'journey' because these were the tribal lands of the Cayuse, but the exhibit will point out that other tribes along the route behaved in the same manner.

**Although aspects of the Native American perspective and impact on their way of life will be included, the opportunities are intended to be complementary to what is offered at Tamástslíkt Cultural Institute.*

- **Newcomers.** This exhibit uses an encampment to show how people on the trail were using some of the same resources, and also emphasizes that many of these people were coming to own and farm the land. This can be illustrated with seeds and tools they brought.

Note: The area contains a Demonstration/Presentation space.

Area 7: On to the Willamette Valley

This area covers the route from Flagstaff Hill to Oregon City. It includes the following specific exhibits:

- **Crossing the Blues.** this component focuses on the difficulty not only in going uphill, but also the issues going downhill in general, and specifically, the issues crossing the Blues, particularly because weather is starting to become a concern because it is late summer or early fall.
- **Crossing the High Desert.** This exhibit covers the section of trail between the Blue Mountains and the Dalles.
- **The Last Obstacle.** This exhibit focuses on getting around Mt. Hood, including the initial strategy of building rafts at The Dalles and navigating the Columbia and its rapids, and the opportunity to take the Barlow Toll Road when it opened in 1846.

Area 8: Arrival

The exhibit in this area focuses on what pioneers had to do after they arrived, tired, hungry, out of food, out of money, and yet needing to get shelter quickly before winter set in.

Area 9: The Impacts

This has the following three major sub-exhibit areas:

- **Impact on the Native Americans.** The exhibit component should expand on the story introduced in the Seeds of Conflict exhibit area by noting that this was not unoccupied land and that the people who lived here depended on access to resources across their tribal lands, which conflicted with the desire of newcomers to own and farm land, which used up valuable resources and closed off areas to use by the tribes. It should include that the eventual conflicts resulted in removal of native people from their homelands to Reservations and the consequent impacts on lifestyle and culture. As with the exhibit on the Cayuse, the purpose of this exhibit is to provide an overview of this story and then send visitors to Tamástslíkt Cultural Institute for detail.
- **Impact on the Nation's aspirations as an 'empire.'** This exhibit focuses primarily on the fact that the Oregon Country became part of the United States instead of Great Britain in part because Americans significantly outnumbered the British due to the number of Americans who came to Oregon on the Oregon Trail.
- **Impact on the Oregon of today:** This exhibit focuses on laws passed by the provisional government of 1843 and how they helped shape the Oregon of today. For example, they passed

a law prohibiting slavery, but also excluding Blacks from settling in Oregon. Oregon continued to be an 'unfriendly' place for Blacks. It also excluded people who were 'Catholic.'

Area 10: Where are We Now?

This exhibit brings the visitor back to the present by focusing on the impacts of the mass migration almost 200 years later. It contains the following sub-exhibit areas:

- **Ceded Lands.** This explains ceded lands and why Native Americans have the right to gather resources from these lands to this day.
- **Alive and Thriving.** The primary purpose of this exhibit is to make people aware that the Native Americans are not gone – they are still here and, despite everything, are thriving. However, the exhibit should include information on issues that still exist.
- **From then to Now.** Focuses on the evolution of the State Government, the communities that sprang up along the route that still survive, etc.

In addition to the exhibits, a Discovery Guide will be available, oriented primarily to children, to help motivate them to engage with the exhibits and the interpretive information.

Actions to facilitate the new Primary Experience

- Reconfigure the partitions as depicted in Figure 3 to lengthen the stretch prior to the window overlooking Baker Valley and remove partitions as depicted in the second part of the exhibit space to create more open space.
- Develop the exhibits noted in the write-up.
- Develop a Discovery Guide.

Departure Experience from Interpretive Center

Current Departure Experience from Interpretive Center

After exiting the Exhibit Area, visitors encounter an Information Desk where they can obtain information about what else they can do in the area. They have the opportunity to use the restrooms and then exit the building. After exiting, they encounter a sign depicting the trails on the site.

Issues with the Current Departure Experience

The current exit experience is not particularly problematic as is, but the visitor may be turned around at this point and not know how to access the bathrooms. Also, information on opportunities in the theater and Gallery is not prominent.

New Departure Experience from Interpretive Center

After exiting the Exhibit Area, visitors encounter the following:

- A set of directional signs noting how to get to the Theater, Store, Restrooms, Gift Shop, and Café.
- A **‘Going East – Going West – Sticking Around’** Exhibit that highlights places where travelers can experience more of the story of the Oregon Trail, and places to go in the immediate area to explore the story, using Baker City as a hub.
- An Information Desk where people can get questions answered.
- A ‘sandwich board’ advertising what is being shown in the theater and what is available in the gallery.

Visitors then have the opportunity to take in one or these opportunities, visit the gift store, and buy something in the café, after which they can choose to eat inside or outside on an adjacent patio. Eventually they exit the building and have the opportunity to walk the trails and experience the interpretive opportunities along the way.

Strategies to Facilitate New Departure Experience

- Create Sandwich Boards to display opportunities in the Theater and Gallery.
- Add a set of directional signs in line-of-sight of visitors exiting the exhibit area.
- Create a **‘Going East – Going West – Sticking Around’** exhibit.

Primary Experience: Exterior Opportunities

Current Primary Experience: Exterior Opportunities

Outside, visitors have the option of walking mostly on asphalt pathways that access different features around the Interpretive Center, including 'The Encampment' (set up primarily for living history), an amphitheater, a sluice for demonstrating mining using a sluice box, a replica of an adit, a stamp mill that was moved from the Rabbit Hill Mine, a blacksmith shop, and a covered overlook with interpretive panels. If they choose to take a trail to the bottom of the hill, they will encounter the remains of a covered wagon, a 'Meeker Marker,' and remnants of the Oregon Trail. Panels provide information on most of these features. Periodically they can engage in presentations at the gold panning sluice, the Blacksmith Shop and at the Encampment. The following are the interpretive panels located around the Interpretive Center.

Feature/location	Panels	Comments
Encampment	Emigrant Encampment panel	
Along the interpretive trail	Mammals of the sagebrush country?	This should be removed or replace with a sign focusing on the value of mammals of the sagebrush country to pioneers.
Near sluice	Lost Blue Bucket mine	This should be removed.
Stamp Mill overlook	Hard rock and Lode Mine Overview panel	Located on the trail above the mine shaft and stamp mill. Should be located closer to the mining camp.
Adit (mine entrance)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mine shaft Bats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although bats probably live in the mine shaft, they do not really pertain to the story of the Oregon Trail, so the sign should be removed. The mine shaft can be connected to mining and the establishment of Baker City and Auburn.
Stamp Mill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exterior panel about stamp mill. Interior exhibits about mills in the area, life at the mill, gold in Eastern Oregon, and mining equipment. 	The exhibits inside the mill are primarily text and need to be upgraded.
Blacksmith shop	Blacksmith shop	No interpretation of the tools on the inside. It appears to have been set up for demonstrations.
Baker Valley overlook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A view to the Blues Farming in Baker County Livestock Grazing on Public Lands Evenings in Sagebrush Country 	For the most part, the panels do not pertain to the Oregon Trail. They should be switched with ones that do.

Along asphalt trail connecting ruts to the Visitor Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eagle Valley Railroad Geology of Eastern Oregon Clouds: What they tell you. 	For the most part, the information on the panels is not tied to the story of the Oregon Trail. However, the one about the Eagle RR can be connected to the trail by focusing on the fact that transportation routes were a key to cultural activity and development.
Shelter near Meeker Marker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information on heat related medical issues. Trail map 	
Meeker Marker	Meeker's quest to mark the trail	
Near entry to trail	Ruts of the Oregon Trail	Also identifies three other locations to see the trail in Oregon.

Issues with current Primary Experience: Exterior

The interpretive opportunities outside the building have the following issues:

- The Encampment is set up for living history, which is not likely to be an offering in the near future. In addition, the location is subject to high winds and exposure.
- The amphitheater is located and constructed in such a way that people sitting in the seats are facing into the sun. However, this is one of the best views of Baker Valley.
- The sluice box is located adjacent to the trail on a relatively steep slope, thus when a demonstration occurs, the trail becomes quite congested.
- The signs are a hodgepodge in terms of design.
- Many of the interpretive panels do not really focus on the story of the Oregon Trail, especially those in the overlook shelter.
- Several panels are not in-line-of-sight with what they are interpreting (for example the interpretive panel on the Blacksmith shop is near the building but the structure is not in line-of-sight for those reading the panel).
- Trail grades make them difficult for some people, especially people in wheelchairs.
- For the most part, the interpretive opportunities are not grouped into logical combinations.

New Primary Experience: Exterior (see Figure 6)

Rather than have interpretive signs spread around the site, the basic concept is to develop the following pods of interpretive opportunities, as depicted on Figure 4:

- The Encampment.** The wagons are located in Parking Area 3 arranged in an arc against the hillside. Items have been added so this becomes an exterior exhibit rather than a backdrop for living history. Panels in this area focus on life along the trail using the wagons and campfire as a focal point. Points of emphasis would be on the daily grind involved in the journey, the types of wagons used, the food the newcomers were forced to eat, plants they used, etc.
- Amphitheater.** This has also been moved to Parking Area 3 and located so people sitting in the amphitheater are looking at Virtue Flats, which is an advantage because the view is essentially natural and much like it probably looked when the newcomers passed through.
- Oregon Trail Overlook.** This set of panels is located at the overlook near the Encampment where visitors can see Virtue Flats, Baker Valley, and the scar of the Eagle RR. The sign facing SW should be similar to 'A View to the Blues' with a focus on how the newcomers reacted to reaching the last major mountain barrier along the route. The one oriented to the scar of the

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Eagle RR (which would also include a view of the route of the trail and Interstate 84) should focus on the importance of transportation routes on cultural activity and development. The sign oriented toward Virtue Flats should identify the trail, with a focus on what the newcomers had to endure to get to this point, especially lack of water in a semi-arid environment.

4. **Mining Camp.** This includes the adit, the stamp mill, and the blacksmith shop. It could use additional buildings related to the story, notably, a miner's tent. The sluice box is moved closer to the mining camp to reduce congestion on the trail and make it a more integral part of the mining story.
5. **Sheltered Overlook: Baker Valley and the Oregon Trail.** This structure now contains the following panels:
 - **The Importance of Water.** This focuses on the importance of water in a semi-arid environment and the issues pioneers had obtaining water along the route, which made getting to the Blues a relief.
 - **Baker City Then and Now.** This panel focuses on the role of the Oregon Trail when gold was discovered near Baker City in 1860. It will make visitors aware of the interpretive opportunities at Sumpter. It will also include a comparison of the valley then with now.
 - **Traveling up the valley.** This panel focuses on the route wagon trains took up the valley, which was along the edges because the valley floor was often marshy.
6. **The Oregon Trail.** This set of panels, near the ruts at the base of the hill and in view of the Meeker Marker, includes one on Meeker Markers and one on the ruts.

All other panels have been removed.

Note: *This does not address what should happen in the flat area where the Encampment is now located.*

Strategies to Facilitate Future Primary Exterior Experience

1. Remove the existing amphitheater and construct a new one at the edge of Parking Area 3, oriented so people in the amphitheater are facing Virtue Flats.
2. Move the wagons in the Encampment to Parking Area 3 and add items to create an exterior exhibit. Interpretive Panels should be added that focus on food they foraged from the area, one on plants they used along the way, and one on a typical day (when they started in the morning, when they took a break, when they stopped and when they went to bed.) However, it should be designed to facilitate use for living history if such an opportunity should occur.
3. Eliminate the following signs:
 - a. View to the Blues (similar sign should be developed for the Overlook Shelter but with more of a focus on the Oregon Trail)
 - b. Lost Blue Bucket Mine (similar sign should be developed to focus on placer mining, which requires a sluice box, and was the way gold was discovered in the area that caused the 1861 gold rush and subsequent establishment of Auburn and Baker City)
 - c. Mammals of the Sagebrush Country
 - d. Farming in Baker County
 - e. Livestock Grazing on Public Lands
 - f. Evenings in Sagebrush Country (similar sign should be located near the encampment, but with focus on evenings on the trail in sagebrush country)
 - g. Geology of Eastern Oregon
 - h. Clouds: What they tell you

- i. Eagle Valley Railroad (similar sign should be developed focusing on the key role of transportation routes on cultural activity and development)
4. Revise the panels within the stamp mill. The point is not to educate people on how a stamp mill works, but rather to highlight the differences between placer mining and hard rock mining. In other words, it should expand on the initial interpretive panel on the exterior.
5. Put a pod of interpretive panels at the overlook near the Encampment where visitors can see Virtue Flats, Baker Valley, and the scar of the Eagle RR.
6. Revise the items in the Blacksmith Shop so they reflect what would be found in a mining town and change the interpretive panel to focus on the importance of blacksmiths both in mining camps, on the journey and in pioneer towns, and locate it directly in front of the shop.
7. Move the sluice box exhibit closer to the 'mining camp,' and add a sign about placer mining, hydraulic mining, etc. A sign could also be added about the discovery of gold near Baker City.
8. Replace the signage in the viewpoint shelter with the following:
 - a. Baker Valley then and now. This should contrast the marsh that the pioneers encountered with what is there now.
 - b. The importance of water in a semi-arid environment.
 - c. The actual route of the trail (so it avoided boggy areas in the valley). One possible approach is to contrast the valley as it looked when the pioneers came across the Oregon Trail to the way it looks now, with an explanation of what changes occurred and why.

Note: *The Discovery Guide will include the exterior experience.*

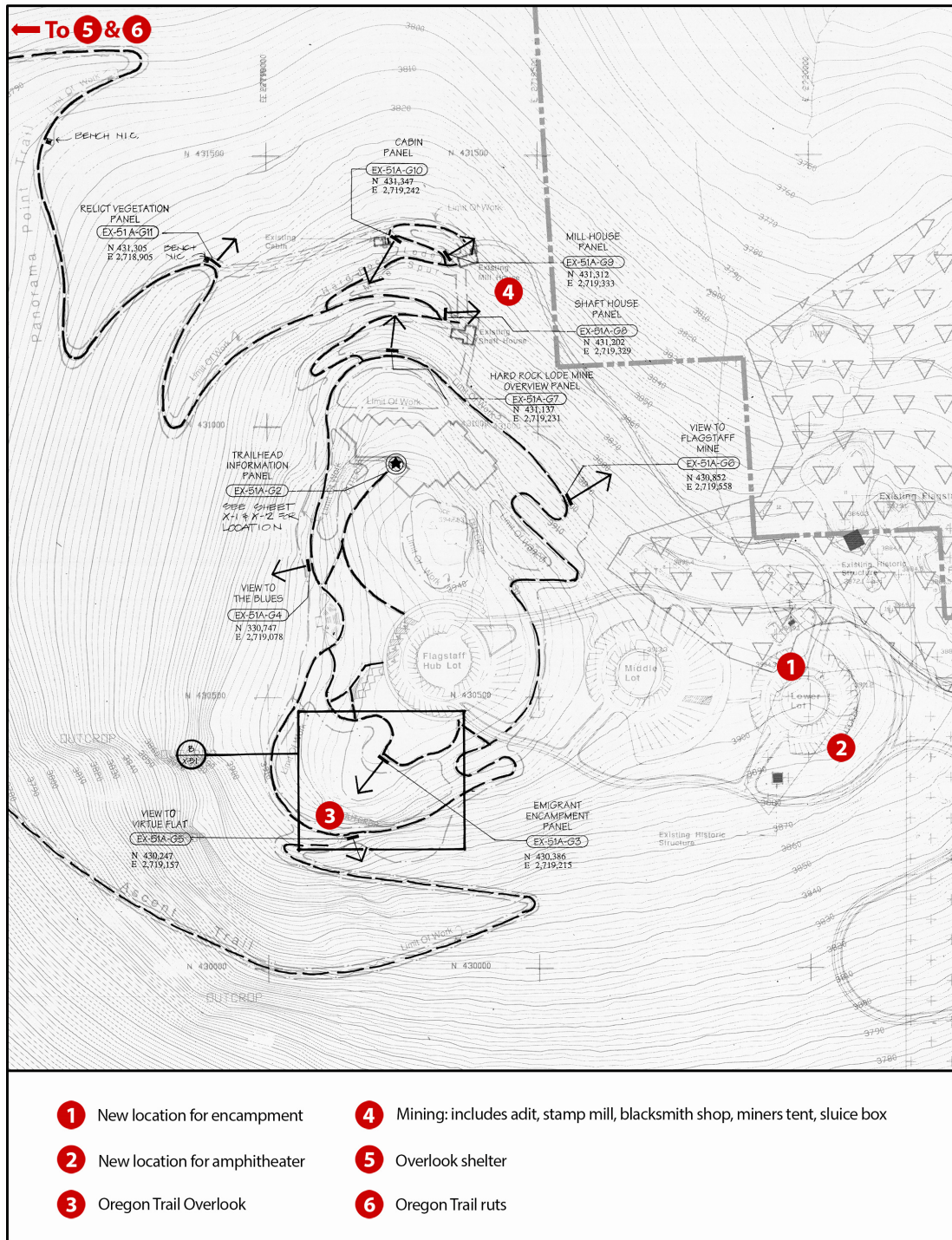


Figure 6: Proposed Exterior Opportunities

Departure Experience from the Site

Current Departure Experience

Most people departing the facility will turn right at the junction with the highway and head west (although some are confused). Along the way, they can choose to do any of the following:

1. Stop at the trailhead for the trail to the ruts, take in the sign about the Lure of Gold and how it affected emigration patterns along the trail and take the trail to the rut.
2. Stop and read the sign about the Lone Tree of the Oregon Trail
3. Stop at the Memorial to the Oregon Trail

Issues with the Current Departure Experience

- Some people are not sure what direction to turn when they reach Highway 86.
- The 'Lure of Gold' panel is not in a good location. It should be replaced with one focusing on Ruts from the Oregon Trail and the route.

Future Departure Experience

Visitors departing the facility will encounter a 'Thank You for Coming' sign near the junction of the highway and will encounter a directional sign at the junction of Highway 26 and the access road letting them know what can be found in each direction. If they turn west, they can do any of the following:

1. Stop at the trailhead for the trail to the ruts, take in a sign about ruts from the Oregon Trail, how many miles are left, and mute testimony the ruts provide on the sheer numbers of emigrants who used that trail. They can then take the trail to the ruts.
2. Stop and read the sign about the Lone Tree of the Oregon Trail
3. Stop at the Memorial to the Oregon Trail
4. Using a map of Oregon Trail Sites obtained at the Center, they can choose to stop at the Baker Heritage Museum, take a side trip to Sumpter, visit Tamástslíkt Cultural Institute, stop at Echo Meadows and visit a myriad of other locations relating to the Oregon Trail.

Strategies to Facilitate Future Departure Experience

The most important strategy is to market other destinations in the area that are connected with stories told at the NHOTIC. Other strategies include the following:

1. Install a 'Thank You for Coming' sign visitors can see as they leave.
2. Put in directional signage at the intersection of the highway and access road.
3. Replace the 'Lure of Gold' sign with one focusing on the trail and ruts.
4. Develop a map of 'Oregon Trail Sites' to be distributed in the facility.

Design Concepts

Introduction

Design concepts are not intended to be designs, or even rough designs. That would provide an obstacle to designers doing what they do best – design. The purpose of the design concepts is to help clarify the intent of a strategy and provide a starting place for developing designs.

The following section includes Design Concepts for all elements noted in the Arrival, Primary and Departure Experiences, except for the Videos and Presentations and Events because objectives and messaging for such opportunities depends on the opportunity.

Strategies to Enhance Arrival Experience

The following strategies were recommended in the overview of the Arrival Experience:

- **Signage on Highway 86** indicating that the turn to the Center is ahead from both directions (this will require working with ODOT and will have to conform to ODOT standards – no Design Concept is necessary).
- A **‘Welcome to the National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center’** sign in place of the existing panel about NHOTIC that is located near the entry. (No Design Concept necessary.)
- **Signage along the access road noting the location of the amphitheater and Encampment.**
- **Signage along the access road directing buses and larger vehicles** to turn off into one of the initial parking areas instead of following the access road to the Encampment. (No Design Concept necessary.)
- **Information kiosks** located in each parking area on the trail to the Interpretive Center (ideally, at the intersection of the trail to the Interpretive Center and the parking area).
- A **sandwich board-type information panel** outside the Flagstaff Gallery and Leo Adler Theater identifying the opportunities within, including the schedule in the Theater. (No Design Concept necessary.)
- **Directional signage** in line-of-sight for visitors exiting the fee station that directs them to the restrooms and other attractions that are not in their field of vision. (No Design Concept necessary.)
- An **Information Desk** with a lower section to accommodate people behind and in front of the desk who are in a wheelchair.
- An **architectural feature**, such as an arch, spanning the entry into the primary exhibit area. (No Design Concept necessary.)

Information Kiosk (Exterior)

Note: Ideally, the website should be redesigned to include as much of the orientation, wayfinding and trip planning necessary to make it easy for people to plan a visit.

Location

One in each parking area at the point the access pathway to the building intersects with the parking area. The goal is for people parking in the parking area to know exactly where they are going when they become pedestrians.

Objectives

After interacting with the information on the panels visitors will:

- Have had most if not all their orientation and wayfinding questions answered, especially, "What is there to do here?"
- Be excited about exploring NHOTIC and the surrounding area.
- Have all the information they need for their desired experience (including a map).
- Be aware that NHOTIC offers programs and stages events (and have a copy of the event and program schedule), and that they can receive information on upcoming events and programs via email if they supply their email address.
- Be aware of physical and biologic hazards and how to avoid them.

Description and Concept

This is a simple structure containing a 'Welcome to NHOTIC' Orientation Panel, Area Orientation Panel, Recreating Safely Panel, a brochure holder for distributing a map and a changeable space for posting information on upcoming events. Although the Interpretive Center will have an Information Desk, the lobby can get quite crowded during heavy visitation periods in the summer. The Information Kiosk could be utilized during those times to provide similar services to the interior Information Desk to relieve pressure during periods of high visitation and to provide information when the building is closed.

Area Orientation Panel

Location

On the Information Kiosks.

Objectives

After interacting with this opportunity, visitors will:

- Be comfortable in their ability to find their way around the area.
- Know where they are in relation to major roads, towns, and destinations in the area.
- Be motivated to explore the site and surrounding area.

Design Concept

The keys to effective orientation panels are to limit information to that which is useful; orient it in the direction people are facing when reading the map (if possible); use the same map as used in other maps of the area; and use a 3-dimensional perspective.

At a minimum, the Area Orientation Panel should contain the following:

- Map of the site with basic features of importance to the traveler, such as interpretive opportunities.
- Mileages and travel times to destinations in the area, in miles and kilometers, and in terms of travel time (both if walking or driving).
- A "You Are Here."
- Visuals of key recreational opportunities in the area linked to specific locations.
- North arrow.
- Inset map of the area with local roads and communities highlighted.

One possible approach is to use a stylized three-dimensional representation of the site from an oblique aerial perspective as the basis for the map. Although this is more expensive to produce because it is a custom illustration, a three-dimensional representation is easier for most visitors to use. If this is not possible, a flat map should be used. Key locations and features would be enlarged to reflect significance and make it easier for users to find key locations.

Images of key recreational opportunities would be arranged around the perimeter with graphic elements (lines) connecting the image to the appropriate location on the map. The images could include, but are not limited to, visiting the facility, hiking the associated trails, visiting the Baker Heritage Museum, etc. The intent is not to provide people with all the information to visit those places and engage in recreational opportunities, but rather to communicate the fact that the area has a large array of opportunities for recreating and learning more of the story.

Note: *It is important to orient maps to the direction visitors are facing when looking at the map instead of orienting them so north is up. The former makes it much easier for visitors to use because they assume that whatever is at the top of the map is directly in front of them.*

Recreating Safely Panel

Locations

Recommended locations include the following:

- Information kiosks located in the visitor facility parking lots.
- At the trailhead on Highway 86 leading to the wagon ruts.
- At the access point to the interpretive trail.

Objectives

After interacting with this opportunity, visitors will:

- Be aware of the hazards related to plants and wildlife associated with recreating in this area, and the low probability of encountering a problem, especially when practicing appropriate behaviors.
- Be aware of how to avoid hazards.

- Be aware that thousands of people engage in recreational activities in this type of environment without experiencing any problems with native vegetation or wildlife.
- Be aware of the need for drinking water to avoid heat-related issues.
- Know that the store in the Interpretive Center carries items such as insect repellent, sun screen, and other items that would help facilitate a safe trip. (Unless this is an issue due to competition with local outlets, in which case, the visitor should know what to take.)
- Feel comfortable engaging in recreational opportunities in the area.

Description and Concept

The key to a panel accomplishing the goals of encouraging visitors to engage in outdoor recreational activities, while at the same time educating them about how to do so safely, is a challenge. The area has hazards, and they should not be minimized, but visitors should also not be frightened away from recreational opportunities.

The information can be presented in a variety of ways, but it is important to use visuals to depict key pieces of information, including depicting people behaving correctly, and what they wear and take with them on the trails. The key hazards to focus on include those related to heat and dehydration, cold and related issues, and any biological hazards, such as rattlesnakes, and how to avoid negative encounters.

Note: *The store should sell items that a visitor should have on a trip in the area, such as sun block, hats, insect repellent, etc. However, these items should not be sold if they are easily available from a nearby private vendor.*

Note: *The ‘dos and don’ts’ approach, particularly without visuals, should be avoided because the information what visitors need to know, such as how to behave when exploring the area, does not fit neatly into such categories.*

Note: *A ‘Recreating Safely’ Exhibit should also be located in the visitor facility.*

Directional Signage (Interior)

Location

In clear line-of-sight for people entering to pay their fee.

Objectives

After interacting with this opportunity, visitors will:

- Know where the restrooms are located.
- Be aware that the facility has a Café and know where it is located.
- Be aware that the facility has a video/presentation room and know where it is located.
- Be aware that the facility has a Gift Store and know where it is located.
- Be aware that the facility has an Information Desk and know where it is located.
- Be aware that the building contains interpretive opportunities.

Description and Concept

One possible approach is to mimic a street sign, using small rectangular panels with the location and an arrow arranged around a vertical structure like a pole. This sign system would include not only the destinations within the building, but also opportunities just outside (the Interpretive Trail). Note that whatever is used, it must be visible to people even if the facility is crowded.

Information Desk

Location

In the area to the right as you enter the building, located near the Flagstaff Gallery in such a way that access to the staff offices is blocked by the information desk, but access to the Gallery is not.

Objectives

After interacting with the opportunities in this area, at a minimum, visitors will:

- Have had most if not all their orientation and wayfinding questions answered, especially, "What is there to do here?"
- Be excited about exploring the nearby area, including the interpretive trail, Encampment, and Baker City.
- Have all the information they need for their desired experience (including a map).
- Be aware that NHOTIC offers programs and stages events (and have a copy of the event and program schedule), and that they can receive information on upcoming events and programs via email if they supply their email address.

Description and Concept

The Information Desk provides visitors with the opportunity to gather information from and ask questions of the staff. It is a critical part of the experience because some people prefer to get information personally. Information available at the Information Desk includes:

- Information on upcoming and regular events and programs.
- Suggested itineraries based on time required.
- An optional sign-in book that visitors can use to enter emails addresses so they can hear about events and programs.

The desk itself should have two spots for visitors to receive information – one designated for people with quick questions and one designated for people who want a more in-depth discussion on where to go and what to do. It should also have a low counter so people in wheelchairs can staff the station or feel more comfortable talking with someone behind the counter.

Self-Serve Orientation Area

The self-serve orientation area allows visitors to get all the orientation and wayfinding information they need without having to go to the information desk. Availability of information in this area eases pressure on the Information Desk when the facility is crowded and serves visitors who prefer to gather information without engaging in personal contact. All the information available at the information desk should be available here.

Location

Near the information desk, but closer to the Leo Adler Theater without blocking or impeding access to that room.

Objectives

After interacting with the opportunities in this area visitors will:

- Have had most if not all their orientation and wayfinding questions answered, especially, "What is there to do here?"
- Be excited about exploring the nearby area, including the interpretive trail, Encampment, and Baker City.
- Have all the information they need for their desired experience (including a map).
- Be aware that NHOTIC offers programs and stages events (and have a copy of the event and program schedule), and that they can receive information on upcoming events and programs via email if they supply their email address.

Description and Concept

To function effectively, visitors entering the facility must be able to quickly identify the type of information offered at this station. One possibility is to use a large title and visual element clearly visible from the entryway, such as the question, "What is there to do here?" accompanied by a collage of people engaging in a variety of recreational opportunities in the area.

Information available in the self-serve orientation area includes:

- Maps of the area.
- Information on nearby destinations associated with the story, such as Baker Heritage Museum.
- Information on upcoming and regular events and presentations.
- Suggested itineraries based on time required.
- An optional sign-in book that visitors can use to enter emails addresses so they can hear about events and programs.

Strategies to Enhance Primary Experience

The following strategies were recommended in the overview of the Primary Experience:

1. **Discovery Guide.** This opportunity – geared to young children – encourages users to ‘find’ specific elements of the story along the route. Some should be visible, but others should be tied to information that can be obtained from interpretive panels to encourage visitors to read the information.
2. **Introductory Exhibit.** This introduction provides a brief overview of the trail story, the time period and other relevant information so people not familiar with the story have a basis for understanding the rest of the exhibits.
3. **Motivations to Go West.** This focuses on the factors that motivated people to leave everything behind and embark on a perilous journey to start a new life in the West. Who went West is included in the exhibit along with an opportunity for visitors to choose a ‘persona’ to follow along the route.
4. **Getting Ready.** This is the beginning of the story of travelling West. The exhibits focus on buying supplies, choosing stock to pull the wagons, choosing the type of wagon, packing the wagon, and obtaining information on the route.

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5. **Harsh Reality.** This set of secondary exhibits, located in the first section of the 'journey,' focuses on hardships and decisions, such as deaths from disease, lightening the load, finding food and resupplying at forts along the way. This section ends at the South Pass, which was a key to wagon trains being able to make the journey because it was essentially the only way to cross the Rockies in a wagon.
6. **On to the West.** These secondary exhibits focus on the trail between South Pass and Flagstaff Hill. It includes the issues with river crossings, using crossing the Snake River as the focal point for the story, finding water in an arid environment, trading with the Native Americans (along with other help the Native Americans gave along the way), key resupply points (such as Fort Bridger, Fort Hall, and Fort Boise), and key decision points (junction with the Mormon Trail and junction with the California Trail).
7. **Seeds of Conflict.** This contrasting set of exhibits contrasts the Native American way of life, using the Cayuse as the case study, with the way of life the pioneers were envisioning for themselves, as landowners and farmers, with a focus on how the envisioned lifestyle of pioneers interfered significantly with the Native American way of life.
8. **On to the Willamette Valley.** This set of exhibits concludes the journey with exhibits on crossing the Blue Mountains, navigating the route to the Dalles, and getting around Mt. Hood, first by running the Columbia River and then by the Barlow Trail.
9. **Arrival.** These exhibits focus on what settlers had to do after arriving in the Willamette Valley before winter set in.
10. **The Impacts.** This includes impacts on the Native Americans from the time of the initial contact with EuroAmericans to the present, impacts on the evolution of the United States as we know it today, and impacts on the history of Oregon. Because this exhibit carries into the present, it should be designed to be updated easily.
11. **Where are We Now?** This includes an exhibit on Ceded Lands and one of the tribes, notably the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla, and that they are alive and thriving, although there are still issues to be resolved.

Discovery Guide (Sense-ational Discovery Guide)

Objectives

The intent of this guide is to motivate visitors to:

- Experience key features of the interior and exterior using all of their senses.
- Explore the natural and cultural environment both within and outside the Interpretive Center

Messages

The point of this opportunity, designed primarily for children, is not necessarily to communicate key messages, but rather to motivate them to engage in the interpretive opportunities that communicate those messages.

Design Concept

This publication focuses on helping visitors connect with the story of the Oregon Trail. Clues addressing all senses help visitors discover evidence of the past, of the cultural forces that shaped and continue to shape the area and of the flora and fauna that were valued by Native Americans and pioneers.

The actual device can be anything easily carried and used as an identification guide and check-off list, such as a small booklet or set of cards with pictures on a ring. Whatever is used, it should contain descriptions and images of features to look for and check off. When applicable, an item would have two columns to check – one for experiencing the feature in an exhibit or learning about it on a sign, and one for experiencing the actual feature. For example, if the user learned about the importance of a particular plant in the visitor center and then found it along the interpretive trail, he or she could put a mark in each column. The experience should involve as many senses as possible.

Two versions of this strategy could be developed. The simpler one would be available free of charge. A more detailed version, perhaps with information on where to find different items on the list, could be an item for sale in the bookstore. Explorer's Kits sold in the bookstore could have a copy of the publication.

Introductory Exhibit

Location

See the floor plan. This is immediately outside the primary exhibit area, which is designated by an arch or some other architectural feature indicating that the visitor has 'begun their journey' when they pass under the arch.

Objectives

After interacting with this exhibit, visitors will:

- Want to see the rest of the exhibits.
- Understand the key message that the route and destination did not lie in uninhabited or unused territory.
- Understand that this journey was a huge and momentous undertaking.
- Understand that the emigration on the Oregon Trail had significant impact on a national level.
- Know that the relationship between Native Americans and pioneers traveling the Oregon Trail was initially generally good.

Messages

Primary Message 2: The trip was expensive and arduous, possibly more so than people setting out on the trail imagined.

Primary Message 3: The mass migration of people on the Oregon Trail had significant impacts on a national, state, and regional level.

Primary Message 4: The mass migration of emigrants on the Oregon Trail profoundly disrupted traditional Native American lifestyles and heightened cultural conflict between the newcomers and indigenous people in a land already long occupied.

Sub-Message 4-1: These were not unoccupied, unused, or undeveloped lands.

Concept

This introductory exhibit depicts the route of the Oregon Trail. The exhibit should communicate that this was an arduous journey of more than 2000 miles with countless hardships and obstacles, and one during which many people perished. The exhibit should also note that emigration on the Oregon Trail is the largest mass migration in human history – one that had significant impacts on the country, the West, the indigenous people who lived there, and all the lands that were traveled. This is an important prelude to the next exhibit because it should cause people to ask the question, ‘why did so many people want to head West? It could also include an invitation for visitors to ‘experience’ the journey.

One possible approach is to use an actual map, similar to that which travelers on the Oregon Trail had available, complete with landmarks and the time it took to travel each section. The map should depict the general location of tribal lands to emphasize that this was not unused or uninhabited land they were going through or to. This is difficult from the perspective that boundaries between Native American tribes were constantly shifting. However, there should be enough information to show general locations, which will communicate the key message. Native Americans in this exhibit should be portrayed as helpful and friendly, again to communicate that the initial relationship was good, but gradually eroded as more and more people moved West, consumed resources important to the native peoples, and fenced off resources, preventing access by native peoples. Another possible element is to compare travel time on a wagon with a train, automobile and a plane to help people understand the time commitment involved.

Motivations to Go West

Location

See the floor plan. This is immediately outside the primary exhibit area, which is designated by an arch or some other architectural feature indicating that the visitor has ‘begun their journey.’

Objectives

After interacting with this exhibit, visitors will:

- Have chosen a persona to follow throughout the exhibit.
- Be aware of the issues that motivated people to leave friends and family behind in search of a new life and be able to name at least three of those issues.
- Be able to explain the government’s role in motivating people to go West and their reasons for doing so.
- Be able to explain the role of religious groups in motivating people to go West and their reasons for doing so.
- Be able to define the term ‘Manifest Destiny’ and explain how it applied to this event.

Messages

Primary Message 1: The socio-economic and political climate of the time period spurred people to decide to head West on the Oregon Trail.

Sub-Message 1-1: Depressions, disease, and high unemployment combined with the promise of free land and the chance for a new life motivated people to make the journey in the initial years of the Oregon Trail (1843-46).

Sub-Message 1-2: Politicians pushed for settlement of the West to extend the power of the United States, citing Manifest Destiny to motivate people to travel west.

Sub-Message 1-3: During the life of the Oregon Trail, events in the East and events in the West both motivated people to head West.

Sub-Message 1-4: A wide variety of people made the journey for a wide variety of reasons.

Primary Message 3: The mass migration of people on the Oregon Trail had significant impacts on a national, state, and regional level.

Sub-Message 3-1: The settlement of the Oregon Territory by EuroAmericans coming across on the Oregon Trail was directly responsible for it becoming a part of the United States instead of Great Britain.

Sub-Message 3-3: The influx of settlers on the Oregon Trail and subsequent negative impacts on Native American lifestyle and availability of resources was a key factor in armed conflicts with Native Americans, which eventually led to the removal of Native Americans to reservations.

Sub-Message 3-4: Transportation routes dictate cultural activity and development.

Concept

This exhibit focuses on the forces that caused people to pack up belongings, leave friends and family behind, and travel West on the Oregon Trail to start a new life. For some it was the lack of jobs and opportunities caused by the economic depression. For some it was the lack of land. For some it was to escape, whether from debts, war, or other reasons, and for others, it was not a choice (slaves of people traveling West). The socioeconomic conditions and the 'marketing' of the Oregon Country by returning missionaries and other sources of information were key factors in motivating people to head West. Within the context of this exhibit, visitors are given the opportunity to adopt a 'persona' that they can follow through the exhibits such as a child, an elderly person, a Black pioneer, a pregnant woman, a blacksmith, a gold seeker, etc. This will help communicate **Sub-Message 1-4: A wide variety of people made the journey for a wide variety of reasons.** All along the route visitors have opportunities to hear the story from the perspective of that person. This exhibit has several sub-exhibits.

One possible approach for the part of the exhibit that focuses on the socioeconomic conditions that motivated people to go West is to use a map of the Eastern U.S. at the time as a backdrop for the exhibit. Surrounding the exhibit would be different types of people who made the journey. Graphic organizers (lines) would connect the person to the part of the U.S. they came from. Supporting

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information under each person would focus on one of the many reasons that people decided to go West on the Oregon Trail. This is where visitors could adopt a persona.

One possible approach to another part of the exhibit, one that focuses on other forces that motivated people to go West, is to use sketches brought back by missionaries of the 'Oregon Country' along with any other examples of attempts to motivate people to go West. The concept of 'Manifest Destiny' should be included. A summary statement would focus on the political factors and the perspective of religious groups.

Note: Visitors now pass under the arch or other architectural feature that signifies 'beginning the journey.' For example, it could be an arch with the words, "Welcome to Independence Missouri circa 1845."

'Getting Ready to Go' Exhibit Area

Location

See the floor plan.

Objectives

After interacting with this exhibit, visitors will:

- Have interacted with the 'pack your wagon' exhibit.
- Feel empathy with those who had to leave family, friends, and belongings behind.
- Have a better sense of how limited space was for carrying possessions in wagons, especially after including all the essentials.
- Understand the impact of financial circumstances regarding buying teams of livestock to haul a wagon and in buying a wagon and necessary supplies.
- Be able to explain how a wagon train formed.
- Understand the issues with the route and importance of having a guide.
- Be able to explain how important a blacksmith was to wagon trains and to settlers in general.

Messages

Primary Message 2: The trip was expensive and arduous, possibly more so than people setting out on the trail imagined.

Concept

This Exhibit Area focuses on getting ready for the journey. Key components include the following:

- Partial diorama of a mercantile.
- Partial diorama of a stockyard.
- Interactive opportunity for people to pack a wagon.
- Partial diorama of a blacksmith shop.

The exhibit should focus not only on what people had to take, but what they had to leave behind, which is the first part of how arduous the journey was. The difficulties were not only physical, but also mental, including the anguish of leaving heirlooms and other items important to them. Some took items that

they did not need, which sets the stage for highlighting what was thrown out along the way. The socioeconomic strata from which people came can be highlighted by what they could afford in terms of the type of wagon and the animals to pull the wagon.

One possible concept is to use a 'pack your wagon' interactive opportunity as the centerpiece to the exhibit (see Figure 5). The objects used to pack the wagon should resemble the items that needed to be included instead of just blocks. Along the left side of the exhibit space could be a partial diorama of a mercantile and a stockyard (see Figure 6). Interpretive opportunities in the mercantile focus on what pioneers had to take with them for supplies. Interpretive opportunities in the stockyard focus on the pros and cons of horses, mules, and oxen for pulling the wagons along with the cost of each, which ties into the socioeconomic strata from which people came. The blacksmith exhibit could be on the wall opposite the mercantile. Interpretive opportunities associated with the blacksmith highlight the skills needed during the journey and after emigrants arrived in Oregon. This could also highlight why it was desirable to be part of a wagon train that had a guide and a blacksmith. This is the first place the visitors can obtain information from the perspective of the traveler they selected.

The final interpretive opportunity visitors encounter could be a map similar to what was available at that time, showing the route and landmarks along the way, such as forts and natural features. Landmarks were a key fixture of the route and helped pioneers understand where they were along the journey and whether they were on schedule. Those landmarks will show up along the route and will be a key component of the 'Discovery Guide.' The idea that the Oregon Trail was not necessarily a specific route, but rather it involved numerous interweaving trails that all followed the same general route will be included. In addition, other publications available to travelers to help them on their journey will be included. This could be the opportunity to feature the importance of guides.

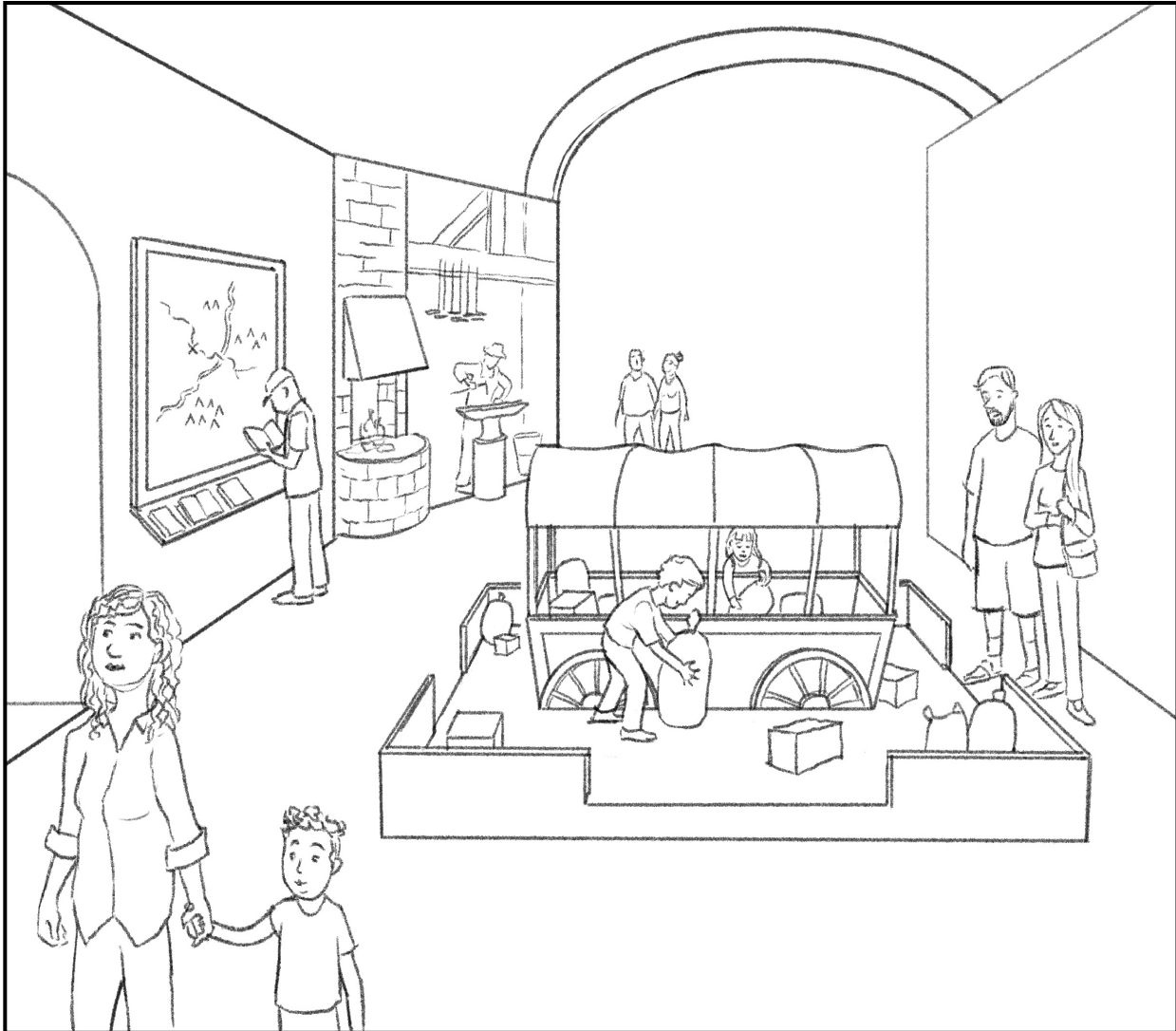


Figure 7: Concept for 'Pack your Wagon' Exhibit



Figure 8: Concept for 'Mercantile and Stockyard' Exhibit

'Harsh Reality' Exhibit Components

Location

Along the route of the trail as depicted in the Interpretive Center.

Objectives

After interacting with these secondary exhibits, visitors will:

- Empathize with families who lost members along the way and/or had to throw out valued heirlooms.
- Be amazed that pioneers kept going given the hardships.
- Understand why people turned back.
- Be surprised that disease was the number one killer of pioneers on the Oregon Trail.
- Be able to explain the role of forts along the route as key resupply stations rather than simply as defensive outposts.
- Be able to explain the initial relationship between pioneers and Native Americans encountered along the way, and how Native Americans helped pioneers through trade and in other ways.

- Understand the issue with pioneers killing buffalo along the route, a resource that Plains Indians relied on heavily to sustain their lifestyle.
- Be able to explain the importance of the discovery of South Pass as a potential route over the Rockies.

Messages

Primary Message 2: The trip was expensive and arduous, possibly more so than people setting out on the trail imagined.

Primary Message 3: The mass migration of people on the Oregon Trail had significant impacts on a national, state, and regional level.

Sub-Message 3-3: The influx of settlers on the Oregon Trail and subsequent negative impacts on Native American lifestyle and availability of resources was a key factor in armed conflicts with Native Americans, which eventually led to the removal of Native Americans to reservations.

Sub-Message 3-4: Transportation routes dictate cultural activity and development.

Primary Message 4: The mass migration of emigrants on the Oregon Trail profoundly disrupted traditional Native American lifestyles and heightened cultural conflict between the newcomers and indigenous people in a land already long occupied.

Sub-Message 4-1: These were not unoccupied, unused, or undeveloped lands.

Sub-Message 4-2: Native Americans were most often an ally, not a hindrance to early wagon trains.

Sub-Message 4-4: The emigrant settlement of Oregon Territory increasingly alarmed native populations and ultimately resulted in conflict that had a profound effect on their lifestyle.

Sub-Message 4-5: Emigrants had negative impact on resources necessary to sustain Native American lifestyles.

Concept

This set of secondary exhibits corresponds with the first part of the journey, from Independence, Missouri to South Pass. Given that Baker Valley is encountered during the latter part of the journey, it is advisable to create more 'trail' prior to reaching the windows. To do so the 'route' in the first section becomes more curvilinear (see figure 3 on page 23). Possible location-based exhibits along the way include the following:

Note: *That is not a complete list of the components that could be included along this trail section. It is a partial list to indicate how landmarks, Native American lands, and hardships encountered by pioneers are interwoven into the story.*

- **Disease and Death.** This element could use the Platte River as the point on the trail for this sub-exhibit because it was there and at similar locations where travelers camped that outbreak of

cholera occurred because of so much human waste from pioneers. It would also include other diseases encountered, noting that disease was the number one killer of people on the trail.

- **Lightening the Load.** This focuses on what travelers dumped along the route, including heirlooms, to lighten the load. One possible concept is to include some 'heirlooms' in a pile in the dioramic elements. Associated interpretive information focuses on why the heirlooms were brought and why they had to be thrown out.
- **Finding Food.** This focuses on the fact that pioneers typically hunted along the way, and also traded with Native Americans for food. The point is to continue to emphasize that the lands the pioneers were crossing were not uninhabited or unused, and that at first, Native Americans were a help to the pioneers. One possible concept is to use a trading scenario as part of the diorama here rather than in the section on the backside of the exhibit hall. A part of this sub-exhibit should focus on the impact of the pioneers on the herds of buffalo and the resulting impact on Native American tribes that depended on the buffalo as a key source of food and fur.
- **Resupplying at Forts.** This could include Fort Kearney, Fort McPherson, Fort Laramie, and Fort Casper. The focus is on the importance of forts as places for repairs and re-supplying the wagon trains. It should help communicate the concept **Sub-Message 3-4: Transportation routes dictate cultural activity and development.**
- **South Pass.** This focuses on South Pass as a key to taking a wagon across the Rockies because it was not possible using other routes. Despite the pass being a key route over the Rockies, it was still an arduous task to get across the pass.

In addition to the forts, landmarks along the route, such as Courthouse Rock, Chimney Rock, Scotts Bluff, and Independence Rock should be included. They should be highlighted within the diorama with associated labels continuing to reinforce the importance of landmarks.

On To the West Exhibit Components

Location

See the floor plan. These exhibit components need to be located before visitors encounter the large window.

Objectives

After interacting with the opportunities in this area visitors will:

- Be able to explain the hazards involved with crossing rivers.
- Be able to explain how Native Americans helped in crossing rivers.
- Understand that the Oregon Trail was not the only trail leading to the western part of the country.
- Be able to explain the role of fresh water in determining routes and strategies for crossing the stretch of trail from the Rockies to their destination.
- Be able to explain the significance of sighting the Blue Mountains to the pioneers and the importance of timing regarding the seasons.

- Want to explore sites in the Baker City area that contain evidence of the Oregon Trail or the impacts of the Trail.

Messages

Primary Message 2: The trip was expensive and arduous, possibly more so than people setting out on the trail imagined.

Primary Message 3: The mass migration of people on the Oregon Trail had significant impacts on a national, state, and regional level.

Sub-Message 3-3: The influx of settlers on the Oregon Trail and subsequent negative impacts on Native American lifestyle and availability of resources was a key factor in armed conflicts with Native Americans, which eventually led to the removal of Native Americans to reservations.

Sub-Message 3-4: Transportation routes dictate cultural activity and development.

Primary Message 4: The mass migration of emigrants on the Oregon Trail profoundly disrupted traditional Native American lifestyles and heightened cultural conflict between the newcomers and indigenous people in a land already long occupied.

Sub-Message 4-1: These were not unoccupied, unused, or undeveloped lands.

Sub-Message 4-2: Native Americans were most often an ally, not a hindrance to early wagon trains.

Sub-Message 4-3: The emigrant settlement of Oregon Territory increasingly alarmed native populations and ultimately resulted in conflict that had a profound effect on their lifestyle.

Sub-Message 4-4: Emigrants had negative impact on resources necessary to sustain Native American lifestyles.

Concept

This set of secondary exhibits focuses on the trail between South Pass and Flagstaff Hill. It includes the issues with river crossings, using crossing the Snake River as the focal point for that story. It also includes the issue of finding water in an arid environment, trading with the Native Americans (along with other help the Native Americans gave along the way), key resupply points (such as Fort Bridger, Fort Hall, and Fort Boise), and key decision points (junction with the Mormon Trail and junction with the California Trail). The primary exhibit element in this section is the river crossing using the Snake River as the focal point for this exhibit. It should depict wagons getting swept away, Native Americans swimming livestock across the river, and the general difficulties in getting wagons, people, and livestock across rivers. One possible concept is to depict the crossing of the Snake in the diorama as a backdrop for focusing on the issues of crossing rivers. The final element associated with this set of interpretive opportunities is the importance of sighting the Blue Mountains and the time of year that people arrive at this location. The time of year is especially important given that the wagon trains needed to cross the Blue Mountains before snow, and ideally, reach the Willamette Valley before winter set in.

Seeds of Conflict Exhibit

Location

See the floor plan.

Objectives

After interacting with the opportunities in this area visitors will:

- Be able to explain the inherent conflict between the way of life of Native Americans regarding perspective and use of land and resources, and the way of life envisioned by settlers coming across on the Oregon Trail.
- Understand that a clash of lifestyles was inevitable, leading to a clash between settlers and Native Americans.
- Continue to have the concept that these were not unoccupied, unused, or uninhabited lands reinforced.

Messages

Primary Message 3: The mass migration of people on the Oregon Trail had significant impacts on a national, state, and regional level.

Sub-Message 3-3: The influx of settlers on the Oregon Trail and subsequent negative impacts on Native American lifestyle and availability of resources was a key factor in armed conflicts with Native Americans, which eventually led to the removal of Native Americans to reservations.

Primary Message 4: The mass migration of emigrants on the Oregon Trail profoundly disrupted traditional Native American lifestyles and heightened cultural conflict between the newcomers and indigenous people in a land already long occupied.

Sub-Message 4-1: These were not unoccupied, unused, or undeveloped lands.

Sub-Message 4-2: The emigrant settlement of Oregon Territory increasingly alarmed native populations and ultimately resulted in conflict that had a profound effect on their lifestyle.

Sub-Message 4-3: Emigrants had negative impact on resources necessary to sustain Native American lifestyles.

Concept

This set of exhibits contrasts the Native American way of life, using the Cayuse as the case study, with the way of life the pioneers were envisioning for themselves, as landowners and farmers, with a focus on how the lifestyle envisioned by pioneers would interfere significantly with the Native American way of life. One possible concept is for one exhibit component to portray a typical Cayuse encampment and another a typical encampment of a wagon train. Each should display the flora and fauna harvested from the surrounding area. In addition, the wagon train encampment should include a display of the seeds and farming implements the pioneers brought with them. The Cayuse encampment should display furs and other items gathered from different parts of their homeland to reinforce the idea that they needed resources from all parts of the territory they occupied. This allows a contrast between lifestyles and the

associated use of land – one as a place to be fenced off and farmed or ranched, and the other as a place to gather specific resources at specific times of the year.

On to the Willamette Valley Exhibit Components

Location

See the floor plan.

Objectives

After interacting with the opportunities in this area visitors will:

- Be able to explain why crossing the Blue Mountains was an issue.
- Be able to explain the importance of building the Barlow Road.
- Understand the reasons for the establishment of the Dalles.
- Be aware that the original trail extended into what is now the state of Washington and ran through the Whitman Mission.
- Be able to explain why the route shifted south to a crossing of the Blue Mountains in what is now Oregon.
- Want to explore sites associated with the Oregon Trail, such as the ruts in Echo Meadows.
- Be aware of the growing conflict between settlers and Native Americans in part due to the fact that both depended on the same resources.

Messages

Primary Message 2: The trip was expensive and arduous, possibly more so than people setting out on the trail imagined.

Primary Message 3: The mass migration of people on the Oregon Trail had significant impacts on a national, state, and regional level.

Sub-Message 3-3: The influx of settlers on the Oregon Trail and subsequent negative impacts on Native American lifestyle and availability of resources was a key factor in armed conflicts with Native Americans, which eventually led to the removal of Native Americans to reservations.

Sub-Message 3-4: Transportation routes dictate cultural activity and development.

Primary Message 4: The mass migration of emigrants on the Oregon Trail profoundly disrupted traditional Native American lifestyles and heightened cultural conflict between the newcomers and indigenous people in a land already long occupied.

Sub-Message 4-1: These were not unoccupied, unused, or undeveloped lands.

Sub-Message 4-2: The emigrant settlement of Oregon Territory increasingly alarmed native populations and ultimately resulted in conflict that had a profound effect on their lifestyle.

Sub-Message 4-3: Emigrants had negative impact on resources necessary to sustain Native American lifestyles.

Concept

This set of secondary exhibits covers the stretch of the journey from Flagstaff Hill to the end of the trail in the Willamette Valley. Exhibit components along this stretch should include the turnoff to the Wallowa Valley (and why some pioneers chose to settle there – in part due to the fact that farmable land in the Willamette Valley was severely diminished due to previous settlement), the issues with crossing the Blue Mountains, the importance of the Dalles as a re-supply and decision point, the issues with rafting the Columbia and the importance of establishment of the Barlow Road. One possible concept is to treat these all as minor exhibits, with the emphasis on the continued difficulties pioneers faced, the role of Native Americans as aids in getting through to the Willamette Valley, and the escalating issues between settlers and Native Americans.

'Arrival' Exhibit

Location

See the floor plan.

Objectives

After interacting with the opportunities in this area visitors will:

- Understand that the difficulties pioneers had to endure did not end with arriving in the Willamette Valley because they now had to find shelter and food for the fast-approaching winter.
- Be able to name the Kalapuya Indians as the tribe that lived in and used the resources of the Willamette Valley and explain how their lifestyle suffered significant negative impact due to the arrival of pioneers.
- Understand the changing political situation as more and more Americans entered the area compared to the number of French and British living there and the subsequent choice of settlers to become part of the United States.

Messages

Primary Message 2: The trip was expensive and arduous, possibly more so than people setting out on the trail imagined.

Primary Message 3: The mass migration of people on the Oregon Trail had significant impacts on a national, state, and regional level.

Sub-Message 3-1: The settlement of the Oregon Territory by EuroAmericans coming across on the Oregon Trail was directly responsible for it becoming a part of the United States instead of Great Britain.

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Sub-Message 3-3: The influx of settlers on the Oregon Trail and subsequent negative impacts on Native American lifestyle and availability of resources was a key factor in armed conflicts with Native Americans, which eventually led to the removal of Native Americans to reservations.

Sub-Message 3-4: Transportation routes dictate cultural activity and development.

Primary Message 4: The mass migration of emigrants on the Oregon Trail profoundly disrupted traditional Native American lifestyles and heightened cultural conflict between the newcomers and indigenous people in a land already long occupied.

Sub-Message 4-1: These were not unoccupied, unused, or undeveloped lands.

Sub-Message 4-2: The emigrant settlement of Oregon Territory increasingly alarmed native populations and ultimately resulted in conflict that had a profound effect on their lifestyle.

Sub-Message 4-3: Emigrants had negative impact on resources necessary to sustain Native American lifestyles.

Concept

This exhibit focuses on what settlers had to do after they arrived. The journey itself was arduous, but after pioneers arrived, they still had to build shelter, figure out how to get food and cope with settling in what was essentially a wilderness, all before winter set in. This does not have to be an extensive or detailed exhibit, but it should clearly communicate that the problems pioneers faced did not end with arriving in the Willamette Valley. One component should be a comparison over the years of the number of American settlers compared to British and French settlers (perhaps as a graph or bar chart). This should help communicate how the sheer number of American settlers helped the United States claim to the territory. It should also communicate that the Willamette Valley was also not unoccupied or unused, and that how settlement interfered with the lifestyle of the Native Americans that lived there depended on access to a variety of resources at different times of the year.

'The Impacts' Exhibit

Location

See the floor plan.

Objectives

After interacting with the opportunities in this area visitors will:

- Empathize with Native American tribes who originally lived on and used the land.
- Be able to explain how the mass migration of EuroAmericans to Oregon was key to it becoming a part of the United States.
- Be able to explain how Oregon's original laws affected the state we live in today.

Messages

Primary Message 2: The trip was expensive and arduous, possibly more so than people setting out on the trail imagined.

Primary Message 3: The mass migration of people on the Oregon Trail had significant impacts on a national, state, and regional level.

Sub-Message 3-1: The settlement of the Oregon Territory by EuroAmericans coming across on the Oregon Trail was directly responsible for it becoming a part of the United States instead of Great Britain.

Sub-Message 3-3: The influx of settlers on the Oregon Trail and subsequent negative impacts on Native American lifestyle and availability of resources was a key factor in armed conflicts with Native Americans, which eventually led to the removal of Native Americans to reservations.

Sub-Message 3-4: Transportation routes dictate cultural activity and development.

Primary Message 4: The mass migration of emigrants on the Oregon Trail profoundly disrupted traditional Native American lifestyles and heightened cultural conflict between the newcomers and indigenous people in a land already long occupied.

Sub-Message 4-1: These were not unoccupied, unused, or undeveloped lands.

Sub-Message 4-2: The emigrant settlement of Oregon Territory increasingly alarmed native populations and ultimately resulted in conflict that had a profound effect on their lifestyle.

Sub-Message 4-3: Emigrants had negative impact on resources necessary to sustain Native American lifestyles.

Concept

These exhibit elements include impacts on the Native Americans, impacts on the evolution of the United States as we know it today, and impacts on the history of Oregon. Given the three focal points of the exhibit, one approach could be to separate it into three sub-exhibits.

- **Impact on the Native Americans.** The exhibit component should expand on the story introduced in the 'Seeds of Conflict' exhibit area by noting that this was not unoccupied land and that the people who lived here depended on access to resources across their tribal lands, which conflicted with the desire of newcomers to own and farm land, which used up valuable resources and closed off areas to use by the tribes. This should set the stage for the exhibit element focusing on ceded lands in the next exhibit area. The exhibit element should include that the eventual conflicts resulted in removal of native people from their homelands to Reservations and the consequent impacts on their lifestyle and culture. As with the exhibit on the Cayuse, the purpose of this exhibit is to provide an overview of this story and then send visitors to Tamástslikt Cultural Institute for detail rather than going into significant detail in this facility. One possible approach is to use a series of maps showing the gradual expansion of towns and areas owned by settlers set against a backdrop of tribal lands. The visual impact should be that EuroAmerican settlement was closing off access to tribal lands and the resources

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they contained. This should be the prelude to an exhibit element focusing on the Indian wars that ended with the treaty signed in 1855. That part of the exhibit should include a focus on ceded lands to set the stage for the next Exhibit Area. The final visual element could be the location (with images) of reservations in contrast to the Native American homelands. Note that this exhibit should include any exclusionary laws directed at Native Americans.

- **Impact on the Nation's aspirations as an 'empire.'** This exhibit component focuses primarily on the fact that the Oregon Country became part of the United States instead of Great Britain in part because Americans significantly outnumbered the British due to the number of Americans who came to Oregon on the Oregon Trail. One possible approach is to use a bar chart by year depicting the number of Americans to people of British or French descent. This could conclude with the historic vote at the 'Wolf Meeting' at which settlers voted to be a part of the United States.
- **Impact on the Oregon of today:** This exhibit focuses on laws passed by the provisional government of 1843 and in the early days of the state and how they helped shape the Oregon of today. They should include when Exclusionary laws were passed, and when they were repealed. For example, the Provisional Government passed a law prohibiting slavery, but also excluding Blacks from settling in Oregon. Oregon continued to be an 'unfriendly' place for Blacks for many years. It also excluded people who were 'Catholic,' and later exclusion laws prohibited Chinese from emigrating to the state.

'Where are We Now?' Exhibit

Location

See the floor plan.

Objectives

After viewing this exhibit, visitors will:

- Be motivated to visit Tamástslikt Cultural Institute to find out more about tribes living in the area.
- Be able to explain what 'ceded lands' means in terms of resource use today by Native Americans.
- Know that the Native American peoples who originally inhabited and/or used this land are still alive and thriving, but that there are still issues to be resolved.
- Be able to explain the role of the Provisional Government in setting the stage for settlement of the Oregon Territory with emphasis on the attitudes toward people of color, slavery, and Catholics.

Messages

Primary Message 3: The mass migration of people on the Oregon Trail had significant impacts on a national, state, and regional level.

Sub-Message 3-4: Transportation routes dictate cultural activity and development.

Primary Message 4: The mass migration of emigrants on the Oregon Trail profoundly disrupted traditional Native American lifestyles and heightened cultural conflict between the newcomers and indigenous people in a land already long occupied.

Sub-Message 4-1: These were not unoccupied, unused, or undeveloped lands.

Sub-Message 4-2: The emigrant settlement of Oregon Territory increasingly alarmed native populations and ultimately resulted in conflict that had a profound effect on their lifestyle.

Sub-Message 4-3: Emigrants had negative impact on resources necessary to sustain Native American lifestyles.

Primary Message 5: Native culture thrives in Oregon.

Concept

This exhibit brings the visitor back to the present by focusing on the impacts of the mass migration almost 200 years later. It could contain the following sub-exhibit areas:

- **Ceded Lands.** This explains ceded lands and why Native Americans have the right to gather resources from these lands to this day. One possible approach is to use a map showing ceded lands and explain who has the right to gather resources off those lands and why.
- **Alive and Thriving.** The primary purpose of this exhibit is to make people aware that the Native Americans are not gone – they are still here and, despite everything, are thriving. One possible approach is to use a collage of Native Americans from the present engaged in a wide variety of activities that indicate thriving in present day. However, this exhibit component should also note that there are still issues to be resolved.
- **From then to Now.** Focuses on the evolution of the State Government, the communities that sprang up along the route that still survive, etc. One possible approach is to use the route of the Oregon Trail with communities identified along the route to show how the route of the trail influenced settlement of towns and cities. It should also include the route of Interstate 84.

Strategies to Enhance Departure Experience from Facility

'Going East – Going West – Sticking Around' Exhibit

Location

See the floor plan.

Objectives

After viewing this exhibit, visitors will:

- Be motivated to explore the site and the associated interpretive opportunities.
- Be motivated to visit the Baker Heritage Museum.
- Be motivated to explore the area.
- Be motivated to visit Tamástslikt Cultural Institute.

- Be motivated to stop at other sites associated with the story of the Oregon Trail.

Messages

This exhibit focuses on the following marketing message:

‘There is a lot to do around here, including many opportunities associated with the Oregon Trail story.’

Concept

After exiting the Primary Exhibit Area, visitors encounter Directional Signage described in the Arrival experience, which includes directions to the Theater, Store, Restrooms, Gift Shop, and Café. They also have visual access to the Information Desk, the ‘sandwich board’ advertising what is being shown in the theater and what is available in the gallery, and the **‘Going East – Going West – Sticking Around’** exhibit. This exhibit highlights places where travelers can experience more of the story of the Oregon Trail, and places to go in the immediate area to explore the story, using Baker City as a hub. One possible approach is to use a stylized map of the area highlighting the road system as an organizer for images depicting places to visit in the area along with brief text describing the opportunity. The map should include the interpretive opportunities on the grounds, in the Baker City area and along routes taken by travelers from Baker City. It should extend to Boise and Tamástslíkt Cultural Institute.

Strategies to Enhance Primary Exterior Experience

In addition to the Discovery Tour, which includes features inside and outside the facility, the following strategies were recommended in the overview of the Primary Exterior Experience to enhance that part of the experience:

1. **The Encampment.** This exhibit focuses on life along the trail using the wagons and campfire as a focal point. Points of emphasis are the daily grind involved in the journey, the types of wagons used, the food the newcomers were forced to eat, plants they used, and how they spent their evenings. It should include what the children had to do as chores.
2. **Oregon Trail Overlook.** This exhibit focuses on how the newcomers reacted to reaching the second to last major mountain barrier along the route – the Blue Mountains. It should also focus on the importance of transportation routes on cultural activity and development as an insight into understanding of the location of the many cities and towns along the route. The sign oriented toward Virtue Flats should identify the trail, with a focus on what the newcomers had to endure to get to this point, especially dealing with lack of water in a semi-arid environment.
3. **Mining Camp.** All stories told in this area should relate to the Oregon Trail rather than focusing simply on mining. In short, it should focus on how mining and the discovery of minerals affected travel on the Oregon Trail, miners chose to make that journey because of the discovery of gold and other minerals, and the establishment of Baker City because of mining.
4. **Baker City and the Oregon Trail.** This set of exhibits, located in the first section of the ‘journey,’ focuses on hardships and decisions, such as deaths from disease, lightening the load, finding food and resupplying at forts along the way. This section ends at the South Pass, which was a key to wagon trains being able to make the journey because it was essentially the only way to cross the Rockies.
5. **The Oregon Trail.** This set of panels, located near the Meeker Marker, identify the trail and the fact that it was a point-to-point trail rather than a specific route. One panel focuses on Meeker and the Meeker Markers.

'The Encampment' Exhibit

Location

See site plan. This exhibit is located along the hillside at the back of Parking Area 3.

Objectives

After viewing this exhibit, visitors will:

- Be able to describe at least three of the physical and mental hardships endured by pioneers.
- Be able to name at least three natural resources valued by pioneers.
- Be able to describe the issues regarding fresh water.

Messages

Primary Message 2: The trip was expensive and arduous, possibly more so than people setting out on the trail imagined.

Concept

The wagons are arranged in an arc against the hillside. Items have been added so this becomes an exterior exhibit rather than a backdrop for living history. Panels in this area focus on life along the trail using the wagons and campfire as a focal point. Points of emphasis are the daily grind involved in the journey, the types of wagons used, the food the newcomers were forced to eat, plants they used, and how they spent their evenings. It should include what the children had to do as chores.

'Oregon Trail Overlook' Exhibit

Location

See site plan.

Objectives

After viewing this exhibit, visitors will:

- Be able to explain the role of transportation routes in cultural activity and development.
- Be able to explain the importance of sighting the Blue Mountains for travelers on the Oregon Trail.
- Be able to explain the issues regarding obtaining fresh water along the route.

Messages

Primary Message 2: The trip was arduous, possibly more so than people setting out on the trail imagined.

Primary Message 3: The mass migration of people on the Oregon Trail had significant impacts on a national, state, and regional level.

Sub-Message 3-4: Transportation routes dictate cultural activity and development.

Concept

This set of panels is located at the overlook near the Encampment where visitors can see Virtue Flats, Baker Valley, and the scar of the Eagle RR. The sign facing SW should be similar to 'A View to the Blues' that is inside the facility, with a focus on how the newcomers reacted to reaching the second to last major mountain barrier along the route. This should allude to the importance of reaching this point on a schedule that allowed them to cross the Blues before winter set in. The one oriented to the scar of the Eagle RR (which would also include a view of the route of the trail and Interstate 84) should focus on the importance of transportation routes on cultural activity and development. The sign oriented toward Virtue Flats should identify the trail, with a focus on what the newcomers had to endure to get to this point, especially lack of water in a semi-arid environment. The following are potential panels:

- **The Importance of Water.** This focuses on the importance of water in a semi-arid environment and the issues pioneers had obtaining water along the route, which made getting to the Baker Valley a relief.
- **Timing is Everything.** This focuses on how the pioneers had a limited amount of time to make the journey in order to avoid being on the Oregon Trail when winter set in.
- **Why a Railroad?** This panel focuses on the story of the Eagle RR – why they wanted to build it and why it was not completed.

'Mining Camp' Interpretive Panels

Location

See site plan.

Objectives

After viewing this exhibit, visitors will:

- Be able to explain the impact of mining on travel on the Oregon Trail (travel in both directions).
- Be able to explain the impact of mining on settlement of the area.
- Be able to explain the difference between placer and hard rock mining.

Messages

Sub-Message 1-3: Events in the East and events in the West both motivated people to head West. (The supporting stories in this case relate to the discovery of gold in Oregon and California.)

Sub-Message 1-4: A wide variety of people made the journey for a wide variety of reasons. (The focus in this case is on miners and on blacksmiths.)

Sub-Message 3-2: The Oregon gold rush in 1861-62 attracted miners to the local area, resulting in the settlement of Baker City and the surrounding area.

Concept

This set of panels includes the adit, the stamp mill, the sluice box, and the blacksmith shop. It could use additional buildings related to the story, notably, a miner's tent. If so, it would need a panel to focus on a miner's life. Note that the sluice box is moved closer to the mining camp to reduce congestion on the

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trail and make it a more integral part of the mining story. All stories should relate to the Oregon Trail rather than focusing simply on mining. Ideally, that connection is made on an introductory panel so the remaining panels can focus more on the specific feature. Possible approaches for each panel:

Panel 1: Mining as a Catalyst

This panel focuses on the role of mining in attracting people to the local area, both from the East and from the West, using the Oregon Trail as the travel route. It should include the discovery of gold near present-day Baker City and the subsequent 'rush' to the area.

Panel 2: Adit

This panel focuses on hard rock mining. One approach is to focus on the tools used by miners in the early days to engage in hard rock mining, and the additional facilities needed (a stamp mill) to extract gold. Ideally, the sluice box is moved close to the adit to contrast the two methods of mining gold.

Panel 3: Sluice Box

This panel simply focuses on placer mining using a pan or sluice box but uses that to focus on the fact that this was only one method of mining and did not account for a lot of the gold produced from the surrounding area.

Panel 4: Stamp Mill

This panel focuses on how a stamp mill works and why it was necessary.

Panel 5: Blacksmith Shop

This panel focuses on the importance of blacksmiths to mining operations, but also to life in general in the frontier.

'Baker Valley and the Oregon Trail' Interpretive Panels

Location

See site plan. (These panels are located in the sheltered overlook along the trail system.)

Objectives

After viewing this exhibit, visitors will:

- Be able to explain the reason Baker City was founded and the Baker Valley homesteaded.
- Be able to explain the impact of settlement on Native Americans.
- Be able to identify the general route of the Oregon Trail along the edge of the valley and why it was located there.

Messages

Sub-Message 1-3: Events in the East and events and the West both motivated people to head West.

Sub-Message 1-4: A wide variety of people made the journey for a wide variety of reasons.

Sub-Message 3-2: The Oregon gold rush in 1861-62 attracted miners to the local area, resulting in the settlement of Baker City and the surrounding area.

Sub-Message 3-4: Transportation routes dictate cultural activity and development.

Primary Message 4: The mass migration of emigrants on the Oregon Trail profoundly disrupted traditional Native American lifestyles and heightened cultural conflict between the newcomers and indigenous people in a land already long occupied.

Sub-Message 4-1: These were not unoccupied, unused, or undeveloped lands.

Sub-Message 4-2: The emigrant settlement of Oregon Territory increasingly alarmed native populations and ultimately resulted in conflict that had a profound effect on their lifestyle.

Sub-Message 4-3: Emigrants had negative impact on resources necessary to sustain Native American lifestyles.

Concept

This structure now contains the following panels:

- **Why along the Edge?** This panel identifies the location of the Oregon Trail along the edge of the valley because the valley was very marshy. That is a prelude to identifying how it has changed and why.
- **Baker City Then and Now.** This panel focuses on the role of the Oregon Trail when gold was discovered near Baker City in 1860, and the subsequent establishment of Baker City. It will make visitors aware of the interpretive opportunities at Sumpter. It will also include a comparison of the valley then with now.
- **Baker Valley was not unused or uninhabited.** This panel focuses on the importance of the area to the Cayuse for gathering resources from the Valley and the Blue Mountains and the problems homesteading created for them.
- **From Dying to Thriving.** This panel focuses on the fate of the Native Americans and their presence now as a thriving cultural group.

'The Oregon Trail' Interpretive Panels

Location

Near the ruts at the base of the hill and in view of the Meeker Marker.

Objectives

After viewing this exhibit, visitors will:

- Be motivated to visit other locations with evidence of the Oregon Trail, especially ones in the nearby area.
- Understand the importance of the trail as a key factor in the settlement of the West by EuroAmericans and the inclusion of the area by the United States.

Messages

Primary Message 2: The trip was arduous, possibly more so than people setting out on the trail imagined.

Primary Message 3: The mass migration of people on the Oregon Trail had significant impacts on a national, state, and regional level.

Concept

This panel cluster focuses on the actual remnants of the trail, with a nod to Meeker and the markers he placed along the route. Possible panels include the following:

Largest Mass Migration in Human History

This panel focuses on the number of people who made the journey compared to other migrations, using the remnants of the trail – still present after almost 180 years, as mute testimony to the number of wagons, hooves, and feet necessary to cause such lasting impact.

Mr. Meeker to the Rescue

This panel focuses on the efforts of Ezra Meeker to document the route of the trail. It would also note how much of the visual remnants of the trail have disappeared due to development and where else visitors can go to see remnants of the trail.

Action Plan

An Action Plan is a list of actions to take to develop a complete information network to support visitor experiences in the Project Area. It includes a Priority for Implementation that focuses on implementing strategies identified in the VIEP, but also any additional actions necessary to facilitate such implementation.

In general, orientation, wayfinding and other strategies that help avoid a negative visitor experience are typically the highest priority, followed by Thematic Overview and then detail. However, a key obstacle in establishing a Priority for Implementation on this project is that the Primary Exhibits in the Interpretive Center should be changed out at the same time because adding them piecemeal will result in a less than desirable visitor experience. However, that change will require significant funding. With that in mind, although it is still included as a high priority because it is the core element in creating an updated and effective interpretive experience that achieves the goals, work on lower priority elements can occur before the changeover. Also, several recommended strategies outside the building are relatively expensive, such as creating a new amphitheater, removing the old amphitheater, moving the Encampment, and moving the Panning for Gold Exhibit, so cost is going to be a factor. However, we do not have any idea the amount of money that will be allocated to NHOTIC for improving the visitor experience. Consequently, the Priority for Implementation is based on the degree to which the action improves the visitor experience.

High Priority

- Determine how visitors will pay their fees and set up the interior of the space accordingly. This has an impact on where to put directional signage so it should be a higher priority than actually changing that signage.
- Upgrade the orientation and wayfinding network both within and outside the building based on recommendations in this plan. Orientation and wayfinding are needs while interpretive opportunities are options and needs have a higher priority than options.
- Add signage and infrastructure changes that helps improve visitor safety. This includes panels on biological and physical hazards and putting in a trail from the parking areas to the building so visitors do not have to walk in the road.
- Re-develop the entire primary exhibit.
- Begin working with ODOT to replace the sign at the pullout that focuses on gold and replace it with one about the Oregon Trail and nearby ruts.

Medium Priority

- Revise the existing exterior signage as recommended in the plan.
- Move the Panning for Gold exhibit to a location nearer the adit.

Low Priority

- Remove the interior and exterior signage that does not pertain to the story of the Oregon Trail.
- Move the Encampment and set it up as an interpretive area.
- Move the amphitheater.

Appendix A: Priority Audience Profiles

Introduction

Information - including interpretation - is a commodity; people buy it with their time, their most valued personal resource, along with attention and cognitive effort. They also incur opportunity cost – if they spend time reading a sign or walking an interpretive trail, they lose the opportunity to spend that time doing anything else. Since different people "buy" different interpretive experiences, it is important to identify the key priority audiences, and then build profiles of those audiences to determine the type of interpretive experiences they are *willing* to "buy" with their time, and the level at which the information must be presented so they are *able* to process it based on their knowledge and background.

In general, experiences that visitors are willing to buy can be described as ones that:

- Meet their **needs**.
- Meet their **expectations**.
- Are within their **limitations** of time, money, energy, and other such personal resources.
- Are **opportunities** that compete successfully with other options for spending time, usually through association with interests that were the primary reason for visiting.

Needs include such basic amenities as food, shelter, and restrooms. The key information-related needs are trip planning, orientation, and wayfinding information. Interpretation is an option. Consequently, trip planning, orientation and wayfinding information must be provided at the beginning of their experience and orientation and wayfinding information throughout their experience at NHOTIC, plus it has to be provided to guide visitors to Extended Learning Opportunities in the area and along the route.

Expectations are more variable because they are created by previous experience, what people hear and what they read. In the case of the Oregon Trail, expectations are likely to vary significantly due to the lack of experience of many people with the area and inaccuracies in how the story has been presented in the past. However, most visitors will expect some coverage of the actual journey.

Limitations are factors that prevent someone from engaging in an experience or interpretive opportunity, such as not knowing the language in which it is presented, or not being able to access a site if in a wheelchair, and factors that tend to offset the reward for engaging in an experience and can therefore cause a potential user to bypass an opportunity. For example, visitors are often on vacation and do not want to 'work'—either physically or mentally—at their recreation unless the personal benefit is worth the time and effort required, and do not want to waste time. That is one reason that interpretive opportunities with a lot of text do not work well. Reading requires more time and effort than looking at images. Limitations can be related to physical ability, language, education level and other characteristics. Limitations regarding lack of knowledge of the area, subject and language are important considerations when serving an international audience, which are a market segment at NHOTIC.

Opportunities that can successfully compete for a person's time typically relate to a visitor's interests. Those interests often exist prior to arrival, or they can be generated by activities on-site, such as by what they see or hear about the Oregon Trail. On-site features are of key importance because they represent one of the best opportunities to capture the interest of a visitor and begin the communication process.

For example, in the case of NHOTIC, replica covered wagons and replica gold stamp mill are likely to generate interest.

Key Priority Audiences

Introduction

The focus of audience analysis in Visitor Interpretive Experience Planning is to determine the priority audiences and then profile those audiences to determine what type of *experiences* would motivate them to spend time in the area. Once that is accomplished, interpretive opportunities can be identified that add value to those experiences, according to the visitor's definition of 'value,' and that the priority audience is willing to engage with and able to understand during their visit.

Priority audiences are ones that potentially have the greatest impact on achieving overall Goals. Based on the goals and objectives associated with this project, review of existing information and discussions with BLM personnel and stakeholders, the primary priority audiences include local residents and Experiential Travelers, especially Heritage Travelers. Experiential Travelers tend to stay longer, spend more, and leave a place better than they found it, which is why they are a perfect fit for achieving goals focusing on increased tourism. This market segment is interested in experience-based trips focusing on immersing themselves physically, intellectually, and emotionally in the stories and culture. They want to learn about the cultural and/or natural history of the area. Heritage Travelers, one of the fastest growing market segments in the United States, is a sub-set of Experiential Travelers who are focused primarily on cultural heritage.

Although interpretation is of high value to Experiential Travelers, the experiences they desire do not typically depend on interpretation. Restrooms, drinking water and a good orientation and wayfinding network are key components of a good visitor experience. That is not to say that interpretation does not add value, or significant value in the case of Experiential Travelers – it is just that it is an optional part of a visitor experience. The other aspects noted fall in the category of 'needs.' For visitors to engage in optional aspects of an experience, their needs must first be met.

Both residents and Experiential Travelers can further be divided into classic sub-segments, such as families and seniors, each of which has specific characteristics that affect the type of experience that they are willing to engage with.

Summary: Priority Audiences

The following are the key target audiences for this project. Note that overlap exists, such as families who are residents. However, each category has specific characteristics that affect the design of the visitor experience and the interpretive elements.

- **Local and Regional Residents**
- **Experiential Travelers**
- **Heritage Travelers (also often called 'Cultural Travelers')**
- **Families**
- **Children**

- **Those with disabilities and the elderly** (These two are grouped together because if interpretive opportunities are Universally Accessible, so they are accessible to those with disabilities, they are also likely to be accessible to the elderly.)
- **Out of Area Travelers (including International Travelers)**

Audience Profiles

Introduction

Audience Profiles consist of characteristics of an audience and implications of those characteristics that affect the audience's willingness and ability to access and process information. As a simple example, children are short (characteristic). The key implication is that information opportunities directed at children need to be at a lower height. The goal of the profiles is to ensure that the Interpretive Program serves all priority audiences.

The following are characteristics of priority audiences that will be taken into consideration in developing an Interpretive Program. The initial section contains characteristics shared by multiple audiences (Universal Characteristics). That is followed by a section containing characteristics of specific priority audiences.

Universal Characteristics

Regardless of the audience, it must be assumed that all preferred learning styles and all physical impairments will be represented. It also must be assumed that children will be a part of any audience as will the elderly. Consequently, the following characteristics must be considered when choosing and developing visitor interpretive experiences.

All Visitor Groups

The following characteristics and limitations apply to most situations and audiences.

Key Characteristics

- All visitors will expect anyone associated with the area to answer questions regarding the basic cultural and natural history of the area.
- Visitors will expect orientation and wayfinding information to interpretive and recreational opportunities in the surrounding area ("What is there to do around here?"), especially opportunities with a similar focus ("Where else can I see . . .?").
- A significant percentage of visitors can be reached using social media such as Instagram, Twitter, Blogs, and Facebook.
- A significant percentage of visitors are comfortable with and often prefer using new technologies, such as vodcasts, podcasts and GPS-based tour programs. Note that older people are less likely to prefer using new technologies.
- Many travelers plan part of their trip, including general itinerary, prior to arriving. Many will use the internet to access information to plan.
- People tend to visit in groups, typically family or friends. Families and other similar groups have a variety of educational levels within the group.

- Any given audience segment will have a variety of impairments represented.
- Visitors will have varying limitations in terms of energy, time, and interests.
- Visitors will have varying degrees of educational background.
- A key component of the experience that most groups desire, especially families, is a social experience.
- Urban dwellers may not have much experience in areas dominated by nature and may be uncomfortable recreating in such areas.
- Virtually all visitors will be in a vehicle, and therefore able to drive.

Implications

The following are key implications of these characteristics:

- New media should be used as part of the information delivery network when appropriate to the audience and situation. (This does not mean that it should be used extensively, but rather within the entire Interpretive/Information Network.)
- Trip planning, orientation and wayfinding information is a priority and should be easily accessible at key locations in the area.
- Interpretive opportunities such as signs and exhibits should be designed to accommodate at least small groups and should be designed to be a part of a social conversation rather than trying to force visitors to give maximum attention to those interpretive opportunities.
- The Interpretive Program should provide opportunities that allow all members of a family or group to be involved at the same time and place, despite having different educational or experiential backgrounds. This can be accomplished by providing several opportunities in one location, each catering to a different educational level, or a single strategy that is designed in such a way that everyone in the group has an intellectual entry point into that exhibit.
- Parts of the Interpretive Network should be able to be easily changed to take advantage of seasonal changes in audiences and to encourage return visitation.
- The Interpretive Program must offer opportunities that are understandable to audiences with limited expertise and knowledge regarding the Oregon Trail and the American West.
- To the extent possible, the Interpretive Program should present information in a way that is rewarding, within a visitor's desires for a 'leisure' activity.
- To the extent possible, the Interpretive Program should offer opportunities to "skim," "browse," or "gorge" the information to accommodate preferences and to accommodate visitors on a tight schedule.
- The Interpretive Program should provide an 'opportunity menu' that lists time required for each activity and suggests itineraries based on time available. For example, it should suggest an itinerary for the visitor that has a half-hour, 2 hours, a half-day, etc.
- For urban residents who may find areas dominated by nature to be uncomfortable, a gradual continuum of experiences – from the outside of nature looking in progressing to the inside of nature looking out – is important.

Local and Regional Residents

Key Characteristics: In addition to the characteristics noted for all audiences, the following are key characteristics of residents in general, and the implications of those characteristics.

- Residents are often relegated (because of work commitments) to specific times when they could participate in interpretive opportunities, such as in the evening and during weekends.
- Residents are typically present year-round.
- Residents have a higher potential to be repeat visitors.
- Residents often prefer more in-depth material about the area, and/or can handle more in-depth material because of familiarity with an area and local issues.
- Residents are often interested in local issues because of the direct impact on their lifestyle.

Implications: The following are key implications of these characteristics:

- Serving residents effectively may require programs specifically designed for this audience or a segment of this audience and scheduled at times they can attend. (Anything that makes it easier to engage in such opportunities without having to compete with tourists is likely to be more effective.)
- New material and programs need to be developed continuously to take advantage of the opportunity for repeat visitation from this group and to address issues that come up.

Families

Note: *In this case families are assumed to have young children.*

Characteristic: Families are made up of individuals of many ages.

Implications: There is a need for a variety of interpretive strategies to address numerous learning styles and education levels. Experiences need to be close to restroom facilities.

Characteristic: Families often have strict time limits based on the needs of various members.

Implication: Experiences need to be offered at convenient times and flexible to accommodate family needs.

Characteristic: Families have a need for a sense of safety and security.

Implications

- Facilities need to be well-maintained, accessible, and secure.
- Guidelines for safety need to be well-communicated.
- Exploring the surrounding area is likely to be contingent on an effective orientation and wayfinding network because it helps make parents feel safe.

Characteristic: Parents like to facilitate good educational and enjoyable experiences for their children.

Implications: Experiences that allow a parent to play the role of a facilitator of their children's experience are likely to be effective.

Children

Reaching children is not about dumbing down the information presented. It is about offering experiences that help build emotional, physical, and intellectual connections to the extent possible, which ideally lays groundwork for understanding key concepts when they are older. Key characteristics include ones relating to their physical limitations and assets, and one relating to mental limitations.

Characteristics – Physical: Children are short. They also often have an abundance of energy.

Implications: Viewing opportunities and material addressed to children needs to be at a comfortable height. In addition, interpretation-related opportunities that involve expending energy should be identified and developed as a part of the Interpretive Network if possible.

Characteristics – Mental: Children are a challenge because they learn differently than adults. Whereas adults can learn by processing incoming verbal information based on previous experience and existing knowledge, children up to around the age of eight do not have a vast storehouse of previous experiences and knowledge. Consequently, they are primarily focused on acquiring information firsthand. Since they have not completely mastered language, they use their primary information-gathering tools – their senses – to explore their environment.

Implications: Opportunities to touch, smell, taste, see and hear are critical to an effective experience for children. This is an important point because we often focus on the need for activities to be interactive and believe we have accomplished our goal if they can push buttons. Although the opportunity to interact in such a way increases the attraction power of an opportunity, if it is not an opportunity to discover information using senses, it is not as effective for children in terms of gathering and processing information.

Those with disabilities and the elderly

The intent of ADA provisions is to promote equal access to the built environment, and to information, for those with impairments. Using a Universal Design Approach, which focuses on creating experiences that can be enjoyed by all parts of the target audience, including those with impairments, involves integrating multiple delivery strategies that involve multiple senses. The result is an overall array of experiences with opportunities that meet the needs of the few while enhancing the experience of everyone.

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A Universal Design Approach also benefits our aging population because it is physical limitations, such as deteriorating eyesight, hearing and physical capabilities that are the core of the issues that seniors have with interpretive and recreational experiences, not their age.

Rather than list all the implications associated with those with disabilities, the overarching implication is that the interpretive program should adhere to Universal Design Standards to make the information accessible to all people, despite any impairment, whether it is visual, auditory, physical, or otherwise.

In addition to characteristics shared by these two groups, the elderly have other significant characteristics, including:

Characteristic: This audience has a lot of discretionary time and income and are often retired.

Implication: This is a key audience to cultivate for active support, whether as volunteers or people who donate time and/or money.

Out of Area Travelers (including International Travelers)

Note: Like several other target audiences, it is important to overlay audience characteristics of basic market segments such as families, seniors, people with disabilities, etc., on this larger segment. This particular profile only focuses on characteristics unique to this market segment.

Characteristic: This group is likely not going to be familiar with the area, Oregon, or possibly the American West.

Implications

- Care must be taken in developing the orientation and wayfinding network to ensure that it is understood by people from outside the area.
- It will be important not to make assumptions regarding a visitor's knowledge.

Characteristic: This market segment may include people who do not speak English.

Implication: The information should be offered in multiple languages, at least Spanish and English.

Heritage (Cultural) Travelers

This group prefers information regarding history and cultural heritage. Note that families, international travelers, those with disabilities and the elderly, and local and regional residents can also be a part of this market segment.

Characteristic: This market is likely to be attracted by NHOTIC and is likely to be interested in visiting nearby sites with parts of the same story.

Implication: The Interpretive Program should make visitors aware of other sites in the area and along Interstate 84 with links to the Oregon Trail story.

Characteristic: Although this group focuses on heritage, especially cultural heritage, they also like variety. (This was a key finding of visitors exploring the Lewis and Clark Journey during the Bicentennial of that event.)

Implication: The Interpretive Program should make visitors aware of the variety of activities and stories available.

Appendix B: Parameters and Implications

Introduction

Parameters are those conditions under which visitor experiences and the associated Interpretive Program must be developed, such as monetary constraints, and under which it must function, such as weather, maintenance budget, etc. They are also called ‘givens,’ ‘circumstances’ or ‘constraints.’ Identifying parameters ensures selecting and developing experiences and interpretive and wayfinding strategies and infrastructure that are effective and realistic, not idealistic.

The following section contains key parameters that could affect interpretive visitor interpretive experiences at the Interpretive Center, and to some extent, the surrounding area. In reviewing the parameters, it is important to remember that they represent what is, not what should be or what is desired.

Key Parameters

Budget

B-1: Budget for implementation will be limited.

- Preference should be given to low-tech strategies that do not cost as much money.
- Implementation will probably need to be phased, so the plan should include a phased approach.

Environmental Conditions

E-1: Weather can be harsh in the winter. Outdoor signs and structures must be constructed of materials resistant to the weather conditions.

E-2: Travel in the winter is difficult. The road is sometimes closed.

E-3: Wind is a constant issue. This creates issues with outdoor programs.

E-4: Summers can get hot. This also creates issues with outdoor programs and advising use of trail system.

E-5: Fire season and smoke creates issues with outdoor programs and advising people of the danger.

E-6: The Encampment is too exposed. The area where the Encampment is located can be very hot in the summer and is exposed to high winds.

E-7: The Amphitheater is difficult to use because participants attending programs in the afternoon face directly into the sun.

Staffing

S-1: Staffing is limited.

- The basic interpretive network must function without depending on personal interpretive opportunities.
- Volunteers are essential if personal interpretation is going to be a key part of the Interpretive Program.

S-2: The BLM and other entities involved do not have staff time available to measure impacts from interpretive opportunities. To the extent possible, impacts should be measured, but measuring impact is going to depend heavily on focusing on *indicators* of success.

S-3: A new Friends Group has recently been formed. This creates the potential for additional help when staging events, developing exhibits, etc.

Vandalism and Theft

V-1: Theft is always an issue if authentic artifacts are displayed for the public. Either replicas or inexpensive artifacts should be used in displays if the item is small.

Safety Issues

SI-1: Visitors are at some degree of risk from weather hazards, such as hot weather increasing the potential for heat exhaustion, heat stroke and dehydration. Education about such hazards should be a part of the information network.

SI-2: Rattlesnakes are the primary biologic hazard. Information on what to do if encountering a rattlesnake should be available.

Physical Infrastructure and Layout

P-1: The interior space currently has partitions creating a curvilinear pathway through the exhibits. This creates the opportunity to tell a sequential story. However, the arrangement of partitions in the second part of the exhibit about the journey creates a relatively narrow pathway in several places. (The partitions can be moved.)

P-2: The building has a large window with a view of the Blue Mountains, Baker City and Baker Valley that is on the SW end of the building. Because the visitor entry is on the NE corner of the building, it means that visitors now encounter that view less than halfway through a walk through the Center. In its current form, which means visitors encounter the view of the Blue Mountains less than halfway through the journey along the Oregon Trail when in reality, this site is much further along that journey.

P-3: The interior interpretive space is dominated by dioramas to create a sense of the type of landscape the trail traveled through and to create space for supporting components. This is quite effective in helping to ‘transport’ the visitor’s imagination and focus it on the story. The dioramas are also quite effective in creating a backdrop for specific elements of the story. However, they take up a lot of floor space.

P-4: The interior space currently includes alcoves where visitors can learn about different aspects of the story, typically by watching a short video. This does not work well for large groups of visitors.

P-5: The Interpretive Center has a theater. This creates the opportunity for showing videos that are longer than the 1–2-minute maximum length of videos within the exhibits.

P-6: The Interpretive Center has a gallery. This creates the opportunity to stage educational opportunities, traveling exhibits, and other activities.

P-7: The building has no dedicated space for volunteers. Creating such a space should be considered if the interior is remodeled. Studies show that attracting and keeping volunteers is significantly easier if they have a space.

P-8: The Interpretive Center will have a gift store run by the Friends Group. The gift store is an important part of a visitor experience and can be used as part of the interpretive network.

P-9: The site has an exterior amphitheater (small). This creates the opportunity for outdoor programs, although wind is an issue as is afternoon sun.

P-10: Some of the trails, including the basic interpretive trail, are currently accessible. The trail to the ruts from the center is not. To meet ADA standards, any information offered along the trails must be made available to those who cannot access the trails.

P-11: The site has an interpretive trail with a gold stamp mill and replica lode mine on the short loop. This creates the story to talk about mining and its relationship to the Oregon Trail.

P-12: The Interpretive Trail accesses a structure looking out over Baker Valley that contains interpretive signs.

P-13: The long loop of the interpretive trail passes by several interpretive panels and ends at the bottom of the hill at the ruts from the Oregon Trail, a replica covered wagon and a Meeker Marker.

P-14: The site has no exterior restrooms. This should be made known to visitors before they exit onto the trail system.

P-15: The site has parking for RVs and buses, although the parking spaces are downhill from the Interpretive Center.

P-16: The interior space currently has ‘wagon ruts’ across the visitor pathway to help tell the story. However, the bumpy surface is not good for wheelchairs, strollers, people with walkers and people who are concerned about their balance. The ruts should be removed and the walkway through the exhibits should be completely flat.

P-17: The outside area has an ‘encampment’ that has been used for living history. However, not only is the site exposed to sun and wind, but providing living history for visitors has become more difficult due in part to the difficulty getting volunteers. The encampment has an interpretive sign. Expansion of non-personal interpretation at the encampment should be considered so it offers more to visitors when staff or volunteers are not available.

Location and Access

LA-1: The Interpretive Center is located five miles from Baker City and a mile off Interstate 84. This is not easily accessible from a time perspective (although it may seem like it). Consequently, that attraction power has to be high enough to overcome the reluctance to leave the freeway if traveling north or south, or to make the trip from Baker City.

LA-2: There is no fully accessible pathway to get to the ruts from the Oregon Trail.

LA-3: The Interpretive Center is on a steep hill. This creates issues with travel during snowy conditions and makes accessing the ruts from the center on foot somewhat difficult.

LA-4: Visitors will not encounter ruts on the interpretive trail unless they walk all the way to the bottom of the hill. They also cannot see the actual trail from the top, although they can see the route. This may not meet the expectations of many visitors. Consequently, the interpretive network should try to change that expectation before people arrive at the Center if possible, and if not, before they leave the Center to walk the Interpretive Trail.

Policy and Legal Issues

PL-1: All operations must comply with ADA rules and regulations. All information presented within the Interpretive Network must be accessible in some way for those with disabilities.

PL-2: The BLM has to follow the CFR (Code of Federal Rules).

PL-3: NHOTIC takes direction from the District and State offices of the BLM. Whatever is proposed for the Interpretive Program must be approved by the District and State Offices.

Existing Information and Interpretive/Educational Opportunities

E-1: An information sign about the Interpretive Center and what is offered located near the intersection of the access road with Highway 86 is not correct. The panel needs to be replaced.

EI-2: Parking areas are not well-labeled. Not clear that only compact cars work well at the top. Buses need directional information before they get stuck where there is no room to turn around (wayfinding information an issue).

EI-2: The Interpretive Center currently contains an array of exhibits that focus primarily on the journey on the Oregon Trail. These are set along a pathway created by partitions.

EI-3: NHOTIC has a number of videos/films, including 'West to Oregon,' a mainstay of their interpretive programming, that they show in their theater.

EI-4: The interpretive trail contains features (stamp mill and lode mine) and information on gold mining.

EI-5: The Interpretive Trail accesses a structure looking out over Baker Valley that contains interpretive signs about the following:

- Livestock grazing on public lands
- Evenings in sagebrush country
- Farming in Baker County
- A view to the Blues

E-6: In addition to accessing the Meeker Marker and replica Conestoga Wagon, the long loop of the interpretive trail contains interpretive panels on the following:

- Geology of Eastern Oregon
- Clouds – what they tell us
- Eagle Valley Railroad

E-7: A shelter with bench is located at the base of the interpretive trail, near the Meeker Marker. It contains an Orientation/ Wayfinding panel and a panel on potential hazards from heat.

E-8: A 'Meeker Marker' and accompanying interpretive sign are located near a replica of a covered wagon and the ruts at the base of the hill. This site is accessed by the trail from the Interpretive Center and a rough trail from Highway 86.

E-9: An interpretive panel about the role of mining in relation to the Oregon Trail is located at the pullout on Highway 86 where a trail that accesses the ruts is located.

E-10: The trail from Highway 86 accessing the ruts passes by an interpretive sign focusing on the ruts, including other locations where they can be seen.

EI-11: An Oregon Trail Centennial Obelisk is located on Highway 86 between the freeway and the entry road to the Interpretive Center.

EI-12: An Interpretive Panel about the 'Lone Tree of the Oregon Trail' is located on Highway 86.

EI-13: The NPS publishes a map/brochure of the trail since it is a National Historic Trail.

E-14: The Baker Heritage Museum currently has a roomful of exhibits dedicated to the Oregon Trail (these may be temporary until the new center opens).

Potential Complementary/Competing Attractions

PCC-1: Sumpter Dredge and townsite. This site provides interpretive opportunities focusing on gold mining and its impact on cultural development of the surrounding area.

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PCC-2: Baker Heritage Museum. This facility offers interpretive information on the Oregon Trail, Baker City, and other associated stories.

PCC-3: Tamástslikt Cultural Institute (near Pendleton). This site focuses on the impact of settlement of EuroAmericans on the Native Americans and their culture.

PCC-4: Emigrant Springs (on Interstate 84). This site has an interpretive kiosk with panels focusing on the Oregon Trail.

PCC-5: Deadman's Pass (on Interstate 84). This site has an interpretive kiosk with panels focusing on the Oregon Trail.

PCC-6: Echo Rest Area (on Interstate 84). This site has an interpretive kiosk with panels focusing on the Oregon Trail.

PCC-7: Echo Meadows Oregon Trail Interpretive Site. This site contains wagon ruts and interpretive information regarding the Oregon Trail.

PCC-8: Fort Henrietta Park. This site is located at the Umatilla River Lower Crossing, where pioneers on the Oregon Trail would often camp for a few days and rest up before continuing on. The site has interpretive information.

PCC-9: Columbia Gorge Interpretive Center. This Interpretive Center, in The Dalles, Oregon, contains interpretive exhibits on the Oregon Trail.

PCC-10: Replica of Fort Boise. This site, on the Oregon Trail, is located near Parma, ID.

PC-11: Farewell Bend State Recreation Area. The site contains historic markers and interpretive displays focusing on Farewell Bend's significance in relation to the Oregon Trail.

PC-12: Four Rivers Cultural Center. Located in Ontario, Oregon, this facility houses exhibits, stages events, and has the only Japanese Garden in the area. It takes in traveling exhibits so this is a possible place for an exhibit focusing on the Oregon Trail.

Other

O-1: The site has a gold panning demonstration area, which is a chokepoint along the interpretive trail.

O-2: A visitor cannot see the ruts of the Oregon Trail from the Interpretive Center.

O-3: There are no food or snacks available. This is potentially an issue if the desire is to hold people for more than a couple of hours.

O-4: Police and law enforcement want the gates closed at night, so they do not have to patrol the site at night.

O-5: The Center has a Donor Wall in a separate space that is likely to remain.

O-6: The interior of the building has a large picture window overlooking Baker Valley and Blue Mountains.

O-7: Several Native American components of the overall set of exhibits – the ‘Trading Post’ exhibit in the middle of the sequence of current exhibits, the Native American exhibit at the end of the sequence, and 3 small panels intended for locations along the initial exhibit pathway – are being designed under a separate contract. To the extent possible, these should be taken into account in the proposed revisions to the Center.

O-8: The trails are heavily used by local residents for recreation.

O-9: NHOTIC is part of the Baker County Culture and Heritage Passport program.

O-10: Sound migration is an issue in the current building (unconfined area).

O-11: There are more than 30 sites on-line that list hours for NHOTIC, many of which are incorrect. This should be addressed.

Appendix C: Interpretive Inventory

Introduction

The Visitor Interpretive Experience Planning process includes selecting messages that will, if understood by the visitor, have the potential to cause a change in knowledge leading to an impact on attitudes and, ultimately, behavior that is consistent with the goals. Stories are the vehicles for communicating those messages. People become more interested in a story when they can see something related to it, and they are more likely to believe what they see than what they only hear or read. Therefore, the more an interpretive opportunity connects with and uses actual artifacts, specimens, features, and other sensory stimuli in conveying information, the higher the potential for the interpretive opportunity to be effective. With that in mind, the Interpretive Inventory within the context of Visitor Interpretive Experience Planning focuses on identifying sensory stimuli and what stories can be told most effectively using those stimuli.

Since the Interpretive Center is an indoor space, it has the same advantages as a museum – it can obtain objects necessary to tell the stories it wants to tell. Consequently, there is not a need to inventory existing objects in the collections. The outdoor features are of prime importance because they offer an opportunity to show visitors what is being communicated. The following is a list of features in the surrounding environment that can be used to help communicate stories.

Inventory

Feature	Story or stories	Comments
View of Blue Mountains	This was the last major mountain obstacle for the pioneers.	A view is available from the window in the Interpretive Center and from the grounds.
Ruts from Oregon Trail	Indicative of the number of wagons that passed along this route.	Visitors will typically have to walk or drive to a point to see the ruts.
Replica gold stamp mill	The impact of the discovery of gold near Baker City in 1860 on the Oregon Trail and Baker City.	
View of trail across Virtue Flats	Route of Trail	Best place to see trail from the Interpretive Center
View of Baker City	The role of the Oregon Trail in establishing Baker City. Importance of transportation routes for cultural activity and development.	
Wagons used on the Oregon Trail (the wagons in the Encampment)	Limits to what could be transported. Why people needed to walk.	

View of sagebrush country	Lack of water as an issue when crossing the West.	
Pass from Virtue Flats to Baker Valley	Route of the Oregon Trail – taking the easiest route.	
View of Baker Valley	Relief in a flatter section of trail, potential for water.	
View of nearby mines	Role of gold mining in the establishment of Baker City.	
Replica covered wagon along interpretive trail		Near Meeker Marker and ruts
Visible route of the defunct Eagle RR.	Importance of transportation routes for cultural activity and development.	
Mine tailings	Hard rock mining	Toxic – cannot allow access

Appendix D: Input on NHOTIC Interpretive Network Objectives

The following information was gathered by having staff at the refuge fill in the blanks in the following sentence:

As a result of experiencing NHOTIC and/or its interpretive opportunities, (target audience) will/will not (do what?).

Families	Take pictures, share their experience with family friends via personal messages, social media, photo albums.
Families	Get a book or video to learn more and have a souvenir of their day.
Tourists and families	Drive a portion of the Hells Canyon Scenic Byway and see the countryside, landscapes, and wildlife
Tourists	Visit Baker City, enjoy a meal and or drink, relax and process what they have learned.
Families	Have a fun learning and bonding experience.
Out of town visitors	Have a better understanding of why people went through the hardships and trials of the Oregon trail.
Locals (school groups)	Have a better understanding of their history.
families	Feel like they can enjoy the experience forever with a memorable photo option.
Out-of-town visitors	See them leave a review and for guests to see recent visitor comments.
All visitors	Feel a connection with the pioneers who traveled west on the Oregon Trail, understand their reasons for making the difficult journey, learn about their experiences, and comprehend the impact and reactions of Native Americans who engaged with them in various ways and who were eventually displaced.
Adults	Understand the complexity of this history and similar migration histories around the world and feel compassion for all who experienced tragedy and heartbreak. I don't want people to choose sides or point fingers, because you have to understand history to keep from repeating it, and you can't understand it unless you examine all sides of the story through the lenses of the time it took place and the perspectives of all involved.
Out-of-state visitors	Be inspired to explore more of Eastern Oregon (which might be physically or virtually engaging with content about EO).
West side of Oregon	Be inspired to explore more of Eastern Oregon.
West side of Oregon	Reference EO as more than 'the Old West' (aka have a better appreciation for the rich and varied cultural history of the region).

Other museum professionals	Be inspired to better integrate multiple cultural voices into their own exhibits.
recreationalists	Recreate responsibly, especially in the nearby, more remote areas (aka have more respect for the land and history).
Local students	Tell the stories to their friends and bring their families back.
Local visitors	Have an understanding of the impact of the Oregon Trail migration to the area.
World visitors	Have a deeper understanding of the impact of Oregon Trail migration to Americas history.
All visitors	Experience the impact of Oregon Trail migration to the Indigenous Peoples of the region.
	To have the desire to learn more, feel free to ask questions, and have a better appreciation for the sacrifices that the pioneers made for the good of this growing country and feel proud to be a part of it.
Everyone	Leave with a curiosity to search for more answers about our shared history, to leave with a new outlook on Western Expansion and the cultures that helped shape where we are now.
People	Be Inspired Have a new understanding on the topic Tell the story to others Seek out new experiences Encourage others to take in the same experience
out of town	Recommend this museum and area to others
Families	Come to the library to explore the Oregon room, where we have many books and documents that are Oregon-specific.
Guests	Explore Baker City/Baker County
Families	Explore Baker City/Baker County
Sr. Travels	Explore Baker City and Baker County. WHY? because we have to increase local investment in the community.
Historians	Ask Questions at local museums.
Locals	Come back for different and engaging programs.
Locals	Volunteer at our site or other local partner sites.
Locals	Feel like a valuable member of our community.
Families	Have uncomfortable conversations in a safe and welcoming environment.
Tourists	Visit (and spend money at) other cultural and arts sites in the area.
Kids	Bring their families back after a great field trip.
All visitors	Tell their friends and family how great it was and promote others to visit.
All visitors	Exchange stories of hardship and perseverance.

Appendix D: Input on NHOTIC Interpretive Network Messages

The following information was gathered by asking staff to fill in either or both of the following sentences as many times as they wanted to.

*After learning about _____ **(topic)** _____, I want people to know that _____ **(message)** _____.*

*After experiencing / learning about **[topic or area]** I want people to know that _____ **(message)** _____.*

Topic	Know that . . .
Migration	Migration is a common human activity, repeated throughout history. The Oregon Trail is an extremely well documented migration, it had big impacts on the development of the USA, and there is a lot to learn and share in the stories of these migrants.
Migration	They have a new understanding on the American migration experience.
Migration	The Oregon Trail is one of many American migration experiences.
Westward Expansion	There were many factors that lead to Western Expansion, many perspectives, and compelling stories
Westward Expansion	The Westward Expansion was a very important part of the history of the expansion of the United States. The sacrifices and fortitude that these individuals were not in vain, it is what we enjoy today.
Oregon Trail migration	The OT migrations mainly involved and impacted Euro-Americans and Native Americans - but there are classic human stories and lessons that can be applied to all nationalities and ethnicities.
Oregon Trail migration	The context of the Oregon Trail era migrations: it was not an isolated event, and the motivations and impacts of the migrants were intertwined with larger social and political happenings.
Oregon Trail migration	Framing the Oregon Trail migrations in a patriotic light and modern values diminishes the challenges, reasons, and experiences of real people. It is important to know that our perspective of how we would wish our ancestors to have lived and believed may not match the reality we find in studying history closely. Keep an open mind and try not to change their lives to fit your beliefs.
Oregon Trail migration	There are so many myths, half-truths, and easy stereotypes about the Oregon Trail - the deeper story is more interesting.
Oregon Trail	The Oregon Trail is one story of human migration.
Oregon Trail	The Oregon Trail impacted many people in many ways.

Travelers on the Oregon Trail	Pioneers crossed the Oregon trail for a reason.
Travelers on the Oregon Trail	Women, other nationalities, and people of color were Oregon Trail travelers, too.
Travelers on the Oregon Trail	The people traveling the Oregon Trail were made up of many religions, cultures, backgrounds, and motivations. American history is complex.
Oregon pioneer history	Oregon's pioneer history is diverse.
Western pioneers	It is difficult to comprehend how close and how far apart we are from the generation and lifestyles of the western pioneer era. Many people like to think "they were just like us" and find the commonalities. There are some, but the world was extremely different at that time and place.
Western Pioneers	That the journey west was participated in by a diversity of ethnic peoples.
Western Pioneers	Not all people who journeyed west were motivated by the same reasons.
Western pioneers	For better and worse, settlers changed the Oregon Territory.
Indigenous People	That indigenous peoples were more welcoming than the common perception.
Indigenous People	That that migration had a profound effect on tribal homelands.
Indigenous People	Indigenous people are often excluded from the Oregon Trail story. women are often not highlighted in the story.
Eastern Oregon	The Oregon Trail and the 'Old West' stories are only a fraction of the stories EO has to tell.
Eastern Oregon	"This is a place where consequential events in American history have taken place."
Baker County	Baker County is rich in history and culture.
Baker County	Baker County is a special place. This history is important, and it is complicated.
Origin stories	There are other great 'origin' stories and experiences in the region (e.g., Tamástslikt Cultural Institute and Nez Perce Wallowa Homeland- and geologic stories at the Thomas Condon Paleontology Center)
General	Everyone has a story worth hearing. All people have value. Every action has an impact - some impacts are positive, and others are negative, and many impacts are both, depending upon the point of view.
General	There is more to know and be curious to learn more, share with others their experience.
NHOTIC	They are welcome to come back.

NHOTIC	The people who work there care about the facility and their duties.
Other attractions	There are lots of other cultural institutions to visit in the area! People of all walks of life made the cross-country journey.