



Oregon

Theodore R. Kulongoski, Governor

Parks and Recreation Department

Oregon Historic Trails Advisory Council

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December 31, 2008

Commander, Umatilla Chemical Depot
ATTN: LTC Robert T. Stein
78798 Ordnance Rd. HQ Building 1
Hermiston, OR 97838

Dear Lieutenant Colonel Stein:

The Oregon Historic Trails Advisory Council (OHTAC) is a nine member, volunteer, citizen advisory body appointed by the Governor to oversee the 16 Historic Trails in Oregon by Executive Order No. EO 98-16. The Oregon Trail is one of those trails.

Earlier this year, along with representatives from the Oregon California Trail Association (OCTA), we conducted a field trip to view the Oregon Trail ruts at the Umatilla Chemical Depot, arranged by Don Gilles and led by Jeff Pardue. I know that OHTAC was very grateful for the opportunity and am sure that the OCTA folks were as well. Please find attached photos from our tour.

Our tour included walking the fantastic Oregon Trail ruts that ran northwesterly from the old airport runway to the chain link fence. We also viewed ruts toward the western boundary of the Depot. We were unable to view the ruts at northeast section of the property due to incineration activity.

Everyone in our party was amazed with the great condition of the ruts, and we would like to express our gratitude to the Chemical Depot leadership for their preservation efforts. The Oregon Trail represents the strength and endurance of a group of people who would strike out and create new opportunities for themselves and their families. The hardships they endured in accomplishing these goals are the stuff of legends and folklore. It is quintessentially American to see ourselves in a similar light. That is why it is so important to preserve and promote their legacy. Each route of the Trail is significant in its own way, with its own stories, and provides context for the history of Oregon, the Northwest and our nation.

With the reinvigoration of the Local Reuse Authority, it is very timely to consider protection measures that will ensure the integrity of the Trail for future generations. On behalf of OHTAC, I would like request the establishment of a ¼ mile buffer on each side of the Trail corridor, and would request that this measure be included as a deed restriction in the event that the ownership of the Depot does eventually change hands. Also, we would like to mark the route of the Trail with creosote markers provided by OCTA.

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I have attached Depot-relevant Trail information supplied to OHTAC by Jeff Pardue. OHTAC would be very willing to work with the Army to further document and protect this fabulous heritage resource. Thank you for your consideration and should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (541) 966-1906.

Respectfully,



John Chess, Chair
Oregon Historic Trails Advisory Council

CC: Commissioner Bill Hansell, Chair - Chemical Depot Reuse Authority
Rod Skeen, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation





