



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

NATIONAL HISTORIC **OREGON TRAIL** INTERPRETIVE CENTER

BAKER CITY, OREGON



Educational Field Trip Planning Information

National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center

22267 Oregon Hwy 86 | PO Box 987 | Baker City, OR, 97814

blm.gov | 541-523-1843 | BLM_OR_NH_Mail@blm.gov



**NATIONAL
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View from Wagon Encampment



Our non-profit partner group, Trail Tenders, offers many programs, events and workshops at the Center year-round.

Visit trailtenders.org for more info

About The National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center

The Oregon Trail Interpretive Center is a 509 acre site that holds many opportunities for educational activities during a class visit. The Interpretive Center building includes a 12,000 square foot permanent exhibit about the westward migration of the Oregon Trail pioneers, Native Americans who lived along the route, and the mountain men, explorers, and missionaries who braved the frontier.

Special exhibits featured each year in the Flagstaff Gallery, including a special children's exhibit during the spring. Films about the westward trek, as well as dramatic performances, lectures, and slide shows presented in the Leo Adler Theater. An outdoor wagon encampment and amphitheater are used for demonstrations of pioneer-era life skills.

The four mile hiking trail system is used for nature hikes, geology walks, and exercise. A short access trail between Highway 86 and the original Oregon Trail ruts is an opportunity to literally walk in the footsteps of pioneers. An outdoor gold stamp mill shows the early day technology used by gold miners. The gold panning sluice demonstration area helps students understand the hard work of placer mining. Interpreters provide talks and activities and prepare handouts and materials to help make the most of your visit.

Please contact us if you would like assistance in planning your visit:

- Call 541-523-1843 and talk to one of our staff or volunteer interpreters for ideas on how to plan the best visit for your class and what options will be available on the day of your visit.
- Check [website](#) for downloadable education guides, lesson plans and class activities. Visit the Events page to view upcoming programs.
- The Oregon Trail Shop, 541-523-1844, has a variety of books and educational materials available for purchase onsite.
- The Trail Tenders, a non-profit partner group of the Interpretive Center, offers mini grants of up to \$50 to help offset the cost of transportation for visiting the Interpretive Center. These mini grants are available to K-12 public, private, and home school groups through the "Keep the Change" program at the Oregon Trail Shop. Please call 541-523-1844 or contact oregontrailtenders@gmail.com for more information.

541-523-1843 | BLM_OR_NH_Mail@blm.gov

School Group Information Guide

Center Information	All Interpretive Center facilities and the Oregon Trail Shop are fully accessible. The exhibits are self-guided and can be toured in approximately one hour. Upon your arrival, we will provide an orientation, briefly explaining interpretive programs and videos scheduled for that day.
Special Events And Programs:	Please view our website for information on Special Events and scheduled programs. The Leo Adler Theater holds 140 individuals and is open to all visitors. If your group exceeds this number they will need to be split into smaller groups. Please discuss this matter with the Visitor Information Assistant when scheduling your visit.
Location:	We are located five miles east of Baker City, Oregon, on highway 86.
Hours	Spring: 9:00AM – 4:00PM <i>Daily</i> Summer: 9:00AM – 6:00PM <i>Daily (begins mid-April)</i> Fall: 9:00AM – 4:00PM <i>Daily (begins mid-October)</i> Winter: 9:00AM – 4:00PM <i>Thurs—Sun (begins early Dec)</i> Closed Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year’s Day
Entrance Fees:	All legitimate educational groups including teachers, bus drivers, and chaperones are free of charge (one adult per 6 students-any additional adults will be charged regular entrance fee).
Oregon Trail Shop:	Just off the main lobby, the Oregon Trail Shop offers books, videos, craft kits, reproduction pioneer items, toys and gifts for purchase.
Trails:	Four and one half (4 ½) miles of outdoor trails lead to Oregon Trail ruts and Panorama Point overlook. Most trails are fully accessible. The Oregon Trail ruts can also be accessed from Hwy. 86. Trail maps are available online .
Special Information:	Only service dogs are permitted inside the building. Leashed pets are allowed on outside trails, but must be kept under owners’ control. Fire protection restrictions prohibit smoking, except in your enclosed vehicle
Meals:	Vending machines (soda and snacks) and an outdoor covered picnic area are available on-site.

National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center

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How to Get Here

The National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center is located 5 miles east of Baker City, Oregon on Oregon Highway 86. Take exit 302 from Interstate 84.



[22267 Oregon Hwy 86](#)
[Baker City, OR 97814](#)

From Boise, Treasure Valley, Ontario:

Take I-84 to Baker City exit 302; turn right onto Highway 86 following signs to Interpretive Center and Hells Canyon. Proceed five miles to entrance drive for Interpretive Center, left turn onto driveway.

From Portland, Tri-Cities, Pendleton:

Take I-84 east to Baker City, exit 302. Turn left onto Highway 86 following signs to Interpretive Center and Hells Canyon. Proceed approximately five miles to entrance drive for Interpretive Center, left turn onto driveway.

From John Day, Bend, or central Oregon:

Begin driving on Highway 7 leading to Baker City. Next, turn right at intersection of Main and Campbell Streets, continuing to Interstate 84. Enter the westbound interstate and take Exit 302 in approx. 2 miles from Baker City. Turn right onto Highway 86 and continue driving for approximately 5 miles to the Center entrance.

From Halfway, Richland, Cambridge:

Begin driving on Highway 86, heading west towards Baker City to Milepost 7. Interpretive Center entrance is on the right.

NOTE TO BUS DRIVERS:

The driveway is one mile long and up to ten percent grade. Drop off for students is at the top of the parking lot. A limited number of parking spaces for oversize vehicles is available in the top lot – ***Parking Lot #2 recommended for buses.***

Educational Activities at the Interpretive Center

The following activities offered free of charge to any educational group or home school visitors:

Self-Guided Tours

Tour the permanent exhibits, special exhibits, and hiking trails. Content of exhibits is appropriate for ages 10 and up; younger students may require more adult interpretation to make the exhibits and trails relevant. A basic tour of the exhibits requires 30 minutes. Question sheets and scavenger hunts suitable for elementary age groups are available in the “For Teachers” section of our website for download in advance. The Center loans out clipboards and pencils.

Junior Explorer Booklets

We have a wide variety of Junior Ranger and Junior Explorer booklets available. Booklets developed at the Interpretive Center are:

Junior Pioneer: simple activities to help younger students enjoy the exhibits and learn about the history of the Oregon Trail

Junior Naturalist: an illustrated guide to help youngsters better understand the native plants, wildlife, and geology while using the hiking trails at the Interpretive Center

Junior Prospector: an illustrated guide with activities to help kids learn about the history of gold mining operations in Eastern Oregon

Scavenger Hunt

A booklet with questions that can be answered within the permanent exhibits at the Interpretive Center is available for [download](#).

Films

The Interpretive Center shows a variety of films on topics of westward migration, ranging in length from 15 minutes to 1 hour. Film titles are included on the monthly calendar; some additional films made specifically for children are available. Please inquire.

Special Exhibit

Wagons Ho! Experience the Oregon Trail is an exhibit displayed each spring during field trip season. This special exhibit in the Flagstaff Gallery includes a full scale, packable, pioneer wagon; pioneer clothing try-on; map games; animal habitat activities; and language activities. Lesson plans to use in the exhibit or in preparation for visiting are available at this [website](#).

Additional Educational Opportunities

The following activities may be available by advance arrangement.

Interpreter-Led Activities

This includes activities to learn about pioneer lifeways or nature such as simple arts and crafts style activities, mapping exercise, barter and trade activity, orienteering, candle dipping, or ragdoll tying by special request only.

Interpreter at the Ruts

Check the site map on our website for the Ruts Access Trail. This pullout can be a pre- or post-visit stop for the school bus, entailing a short walk for students, and will be met by an interpreter who will show them the Oregon Trail ruts and describe how the landscape has changed since Oregon Trail days.

Gold Panning

A replica gold panning sluice box and spring allows students to try gold panning. Students have an opportunity and better understanding of the hard work and physical strain experienced by early day prospectors. *All gold is for educational purposes and must be returned to the sluice box.*

Nature Hike

An interpreter utilizes the trails on site to introduce students to wildlife, vegetation, and geology at the site. This hike can be adapted to best fit age groups, weather conditions, and group visit time.

Scat and Tracks

A hands-on activity using replica scat, casts of tracks, furs, and rubber stamps of tracks. An interpreter guides students through the basics of identifying and understanding wildlife. Replica skulls are also available upon request.

Interpreter in the Classroom

Please contact us at 541-523-1843 to schedule special programs or activities for your classroom. Selected programs are offered to schools or groups within a 90 minute drive of Baker City, Oregon, subject to availability. Programs can run from 20 minutes to one hour; options include *The Traveling Trunk*, *Mountain Men* or *Scat, Tracks, Skulls & Furs*.

School Group Reservation Request Form

*School Group Name: _____

City/State: _____

*Requested Date of Visit: _____

*Arrival Time on Requested Day of Visit: _____

*Contact Person for Group: _____

*Telephone Number for Contact Person: _____

*Email Address of Contact Person: _____

Number of Visitors: Please indicate the total number of visitors in your group, including chaperones or tour guides, and grade level(s).

*Children: _____ *Adults: _____ *Grade Level(s) _____

Additional Needs or Requests:

Please indicate if you have any special requests you may have. Selected interpretive programs may be available to enhance your visit with advance notice. See pages 6-7 of the Education Programs & Field Trip Planning Information packet for details.

RESERVATIONS: Please call, fax, or email **at least two weeks before** planned field trip to ensure space availability.

CANCELLATIONS: Please notify ***at least one week*** prior to scheduled date.

*Return this completed form to:

National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center

PO Box 987, Baker City, OR, 97814

Fax: 541-523-1834

email: BLM_OR_NH_Mail@blm.gov

NHOTIC STAFF USE	Date Request Received & Entered _____	VIA Initials: _____
	Date of Confirmation Email or Call _____	VIA Initials: _____

Recommendations for a Successful Visit

Enjoy — Don't Destroy

By using common sense and courtesy, what is available today will be there to enjoy tomorrow.

- Use your inside voice.
- Food and beverages are only allowed in the Acknowledgement Room and outdoors.
- Walk instead of running when indoors.
- Follow the directions of the Center staff.
- Respect the Center's property.
- Climbing or touching exhibits is not permitted, except for the Pack Your Wagon exhibit.
- Be courteous and aware of other visitors in the Center

BEFORE YOUR VISIT:

- Decide which activities and programs you wish to visit. Coordinate this with the visitor services staff.
- Divide student groups into smaller, adult-led subgroups before you arrive. Try to keep groups less than ten. Five per group is ideal.
- Avoid planning for more than two groups congregated at one activity or portion of the exhibits at any one time.
- Orient adult leaders and chaperones. Please distribute and review the following guide for CHAPERONES with your adult leaders.

SUGGESTIONS:

1. School groups may start their Oregon Trail adventure at the Oregon Trail Rut access located off Highway 86.
2. Prior to indoor activities, have the students visit the restroom. This ensures no disruptions or wandering children.
3. A staff person will provide an orientation at beginning of your visit.
4. Prior to entering the facility, please establish a time and place for your group to meet at the end of your visit.
5. P.A. system (public announcement) is available.
6. For safety and respect to others please do not block entry, exit doors, or lobby.
7. Adults and children should wear a tag identifying their school name. Children's names on tags are discouraged for safety concerns.
8. For first aid needs, inform uniformed staff immediately.
9. You may take photos.
10. If you plan to bring lunch for your group, our covered picnic shelter is available on a first-come, first-served basis.
11. It is recommended that personal belongings (cameras, phones, etc.) should have a tag with school name.

CHAPERONES – Recommendations for a Successful Visit

Chaperones can be a great help in making the students' visit worthwhile – it doesn't take any special knowledge, just common sense and willingness to get involved. *Here are a few tips:*

What will I be doing as a chaperone?

You will supervise a small group of students during the visit, assisting the teacher or interpreter when called upon, and ensure appropriate behaviors.

What will my role be during the program?

- Monitor the behavior of the students, provide for their safety, and facilitate the learning process while insuring a fun visit for the students.
- You may be asked to work with specific students and help guide them through activities.
- You may want to ask the teacher for information about the program, including background information and vocabulary words in order to familiarize yourself with the topic.
- The more you are able to interact with the students, the better their experience will be.

What do I need to tell the students about behaving in the exhibits or on the trails?

- Anything touchable will be within easy reach; anything we do not want touched is located well within the dioramas or within a case. Students should not climb into dioramas.
- Do not do anything to damage the exhibits – thousands of people still want to see them after you have left.
- Do not take drinks or food into the exhibits. Be careful about writing tools. If you need a clipboard for your assignment, ask at the info desk.
- On trails, you may see wildlife – do not disturb or attempt to touch any wild animals, snakes or insects, or plants.

How can I help students get the most out of their visit?

- Be sure you understand the plan for the day, as instructed by the teacher.
- Ask the teacher whether the students have specific projects to work on and how you can help with them during the visit. Ask the group's teacher for materials that will help you lead the students.
- Interact and have fun with the students.
- Be sure to ask questions of each student in your group, and make sure that all of them are getting involved. Encourage shy or quiet students to share ideas.

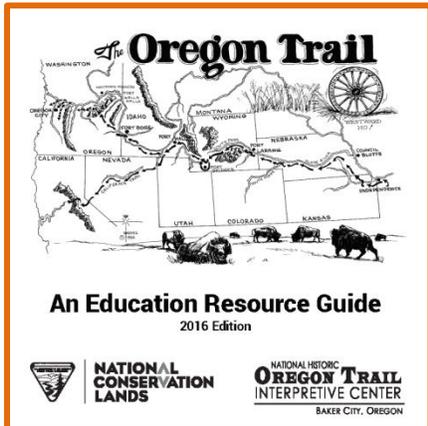
What else do I need to know?

- Avoid visiting with other adults at the expense of your chaperone duties; remember that your primary job is to chaperone the students, not visit with other parents.
- Students must stay with you, their chaperone, at all times. Their behavior is your responsibility. Be sure you know when and where to meet the rest of your group during and at the end of the visit.

Lesson Plans and Educational Resources

Lesson Plans and Activities are available. PDFs available to download for your site visit or classroom use include:

- [Oregon Trail Education Resource Guide](#)



The Oregon Trail Education Resource Guide (updated in 2016) is designed for use by teachers and other educators who are teaching Oregon Trail history.

Many activities can be adapted to younger or older students. Teachers may make copies of any portion of the guide for classroom use.

⇒ [Download](#) the Teachers Supplement for 4th grade benchmark standards for each of the five-lesson

plan activities included.

- Scavenger Hunt
- Exhibit Bingo Cards
- Connect the Dots – Oregon Trail
- Coloring Pages
- Word Search
- Crossword Puzzle
- *Wagons Ho!* Exhibit Activity Guide
- Pioneer Poetry Lesson Plan
- Spanish Language Resources

Available upon request, via email:

- [Explorers of the Pacific Northwest Education Resource Guide](#)

The Explorers of the Pacific Northwest Education Resource Guide (148 pages) focuses on the explorers who blazed the trails to the Pacific Northwest. Guide includes background history, classroom discussion activities, site-visit activities, worksheets, coloring sheets, and references.