

Remaining Issues

Historic Columbia River Highway



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HCRH Signing Plan

An updated signing plan is needed to better direct users from Interstate 84 to both the HCRH and the HCRH State Trail.

An inventory of all signs along the HCRH was completed in 1989, before the HCRH Keystone signs were developed under the Oregon Historic and Scenic Highway Program. These signs used the cover of Samuel Lancaster's Book (*The Columbia—America's Greatest Highway*) as inspiration. Unfortunately, this design works better as a book cover than a highway sign. It is too detailed and cannot be easily read at night. Many of the signs placed in the 1980s are now missing or faded.

Now that the parts of the HCRH are not only part of that program, but also an Oregon Scenic Byway and All-American Road, while Trail sections are a National Recreation Trail, there is a need to re-think what signs should be used.

During the development of the Graphic Signing System, several logo ideas were developed, but none were recommended by the HCRH AC.

In May 2000, ODOT was requested to develop a new sign that would meet all of the existing requirements, including:

- 1) Must comply with the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Graphic Signing System. Basically, the background shape must have an arched top and have three colors of painted wood boarder.
- 2) The design must include the keystone shape, indicating that the HCRH is

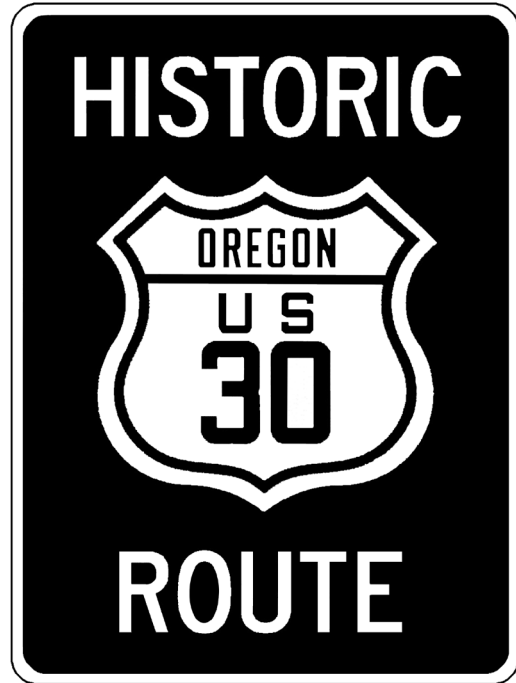


Figure 115—Proposed Historic US 30 Sign

part of the Oregon Historic and Scenic Highway Program.

- 3) The sign should be legible at highway speeds.
- 4) The design should be relevant for the entire HCRH, from Troutdale to The Dalles. (Example: While Vista House is an icon, it is not representative of the eastern section of the HCRH.)
- 5) The sign must include the words "Historic Columbia River Highway".

A new sign design would need to be approved by the State Traffic Engineer, the HCRH Advisory Committee, CRGNSA Forest Service and the Oregon Scenic Byway Committee. No new design resulted from this request.

A new proposal is to use brown “Historic US 30” signs, similar to those used in California on historic US 101 and historic US 66.

A decision needs to be made whether to continue use of one sign for both the portions open to motor vehicle traffic and those open to hiking and biking (highly desirable) or to use byway related signs on the portions that are byways (Troutdale to Dodson and Mosier to The Dalles). In either case, a decision is needed on what sign(s) should be used—existing keystone sign or one that is more legible.

Job Corps Turn

Corbett and Springdale residents have expressed concern about the narrow pavement immediately west of the Job Corps Center. There is no shoulder for slow-moving bicyclists traveling up the hill. Sight distance is limited. The steep side-hill location of the highway restricts options. Addition of Bikes on Roadway with Share the Road riders have been proposed.

Button Junction

The intersection of the Historic Columbia River Highway and Oregon 35, just east of Hood River, is currently a four-way stop. A 2005 study indicated that this intersection is operating at Level of Service F during peak hours. Two options for improvement were discussed – a single-lane roundabout and a signalized intersection. The signalized intersection appears to have fewer impacts on the HCRH. The roundabout would require removal of a portion of the HCRH pavement and would eliminate some of the landscaping and parking area in the southeast quadrant. Whenever this project is funded, additional discussion of the effect of these options on the HCRH historic district will need to occur.

Shooting Range Pit

The so-called “Shooting Range Pit” near Chenoweth Creek has not been used to produce rock for many years. People have used the site for target practice, endangering users of the HCRH. Several ideas have been proposed to move the target practice to a safer site and enhance the view of the site from the HCRH. A funding mechanism and approvable design are needed.

Mosier Pit

Similarly, the Mosier Pit has not been used for rock production since an Oregon Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA) decision. Future ownership and use and restoration of the site need to be determined.

Noxious Weed Control

Noxious weeds are a significant and growing problem within the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. A multi-agency effort is needed to reverse this. This issue is complicated by restrictions on use of herbicide on National Forest Lands. An Environmental Impact Statement is in progress to address use of herbicides on National Forest Lands.

Ongoing Maintenance

Many features on the HCRH required special maintenance. Rock retaining walls and rubble masonry parapet walls require masonry skills. White guardrails require periodic painting. Spindles on bridge railings need to be replaced periodically. In the late 1980s there were special funds set aside for this work; however, those funds are no longer available. A permanent funding source is needed.

Larch Mountain Slide

The area immediately east of the junction of the HCRH and Larch Mountain Road has been slipping downhill for years. Several attempts have been made to “fix” the slide. Most recently, in 1989, roadway on the western end of this section was dug out, a gabion wall constructed on the north side of the roadway and light-weight fill placed behind it. This portion has not continued to slide, however the area to the east is still moving. Addition pavement is added when needed to keep the surface drivable, however, this adds weight to the top of the slide. A more permanent solution needs to be developed and funded.

Ownership of HCRH

There are several locations where the ownership of the HCRH is in dispute, specifically the frontage road east of Mitchell Point, Ruthton Point and the land between the Hood River Loops. ODOT has researched Ruthton Point and the land between the Hood River Loops; this research indicates ODOT ownership. However, the adjacent property owners at Mitchell Point and Ruthton Point and Hood River County (for the loops) also claim ownership. Ownership should be resolved, perhaps as part of the future HCRH State Trail projects.

Perceived Conflict Between Cultural Resource and Visual Resource Requirements

Considerable discussion has occurred between the requirements for historic sites and requirements for visual resources. In particular, when is it acceptable to construct new rock walls? A new rock wall was constructed as part of the Angel’s Rest Trailhead; how-

ever, a rock wall was rejected in favor of the single-slope, exposed aggregate, integral-color retaining wall on the Starvation Creek to Viento project. Additional discussion is needed to clarify how best to meet the requirements for both resources.

Theme for Springdale

An architectural/community design theme needs to be developed for the Springdale area.

Parking Along the Sandy River

Along the HCRH between Troutdale and Dabney State Park, adjacent to the Sandy River, there are numerous “no parking” signs along the roadside cluttering the viewshed and scenic character of the scenic route. Where parking is allowed, cars create a chaos of density and congestion that takes away from the scenic highway corridor and rural character of the route. A solution that provides access to the river at developed park sites like Dabney and Lewis & Clark State Park should be developed as part of the scenic route management.

Casino

The Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation have proposed developing a casino. The Preferred location is within the City of Cascade Locks while an alternative site is east of Hood River and south of the Senator Mark O. Hatfield West Trailhead. Both sites could have impacts on the Historic Columbia River Highway. When more detailed proposals for access to the potential sites are available, the HCRH AC will use the principles outlined in this document, including consistency with the Secretary of Interior’s Standards, to review the proposals for impacts. As noted in the Cultural

Resources section, the Level of Effect must be “No Effect” or “No Adverse Effect” for the proposal to complete the CRGNSA development review process. Currently available information suggests concerns with both lo-

cations, but larger concerns with the Hood River site. Also, the Hood River site would need to comply with the regulations concerning the National Historic Landmark status of this section.

