

UMATILLA COUNTY

The state of Oregon reports no mines as existing within the county, although several areas along its southern border are reported to contain sporadic mineralization.

The Umatilla National Forest covers parts of Tws. 1,2,3,4,5, and 6 S., Rs. 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, and 37 E. in the southern half of the area, and parts of Tws. 1,2,3,4,5, and 6 N., Rs. 36, 37, and 38 E. in the northeastern part of the county. The Umatilla Indian Reservation occupies parts of Tws. 1,2, and 3 N., Rs. 33, 34, and 35 E. The Government has established an ammunition storage depot near Hermiston.

The rock formations of the county have not been mapped completely, as no geological map of the state has ever been made. Little knowledge of the geology of the county is available. The area along the eastern border of the county comprises a northerly extension of the Blue Mountains, which extend through Grant County on the south. The Umatilla portion of the range mainly consists of elevated blocks of Miocene basalt rising in a series of steps, which overlie older rocks that have been sparingly exposed by erosion in the southern part of the area. The northwestern part of the county is largely covered by basaltic rock. Along the western border of the county some sedimentary rocks exist, but they have not been correlated as far as known.

No mining districts have been formed in the county, but mineralization and some prospecting have been reported along the headwaters of Camas and Cable Creeks in its southeastern portion.

Minerals reported by prospectors to occur in the southern area are gold, copper, lead, and zinc in complex ores. The area is rough, timbered and relatively inaccessible. Gold in placer form, chromite, garnet, magnetite, monazite and zircon have been found in black sands near Weston in the northeastern Blue Mountain portion of the county, but the derivation of these comminuted minerals is unknown and the occurrences are non-commercial. Opals occur at a point four miles above Weston on Pine Creek, but the occurrence is probably non-commercial.

Sand and gravel pits are operated by S. O. Felthouse at Hermiston, and by the Jones-Scott Company at Umatilla and at a point on the Columbia River ten miles E. of Umatilla.

Basaltic rock for road metal is prevalent in most parts of the county.

This county is badly in need of some geological reconnaissance work, and the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries has promised that some work of this nature will be performed during the coming season.

Based on present knowledge, the future use of electric power in this county for the beneficiation of minerals will be negligible.