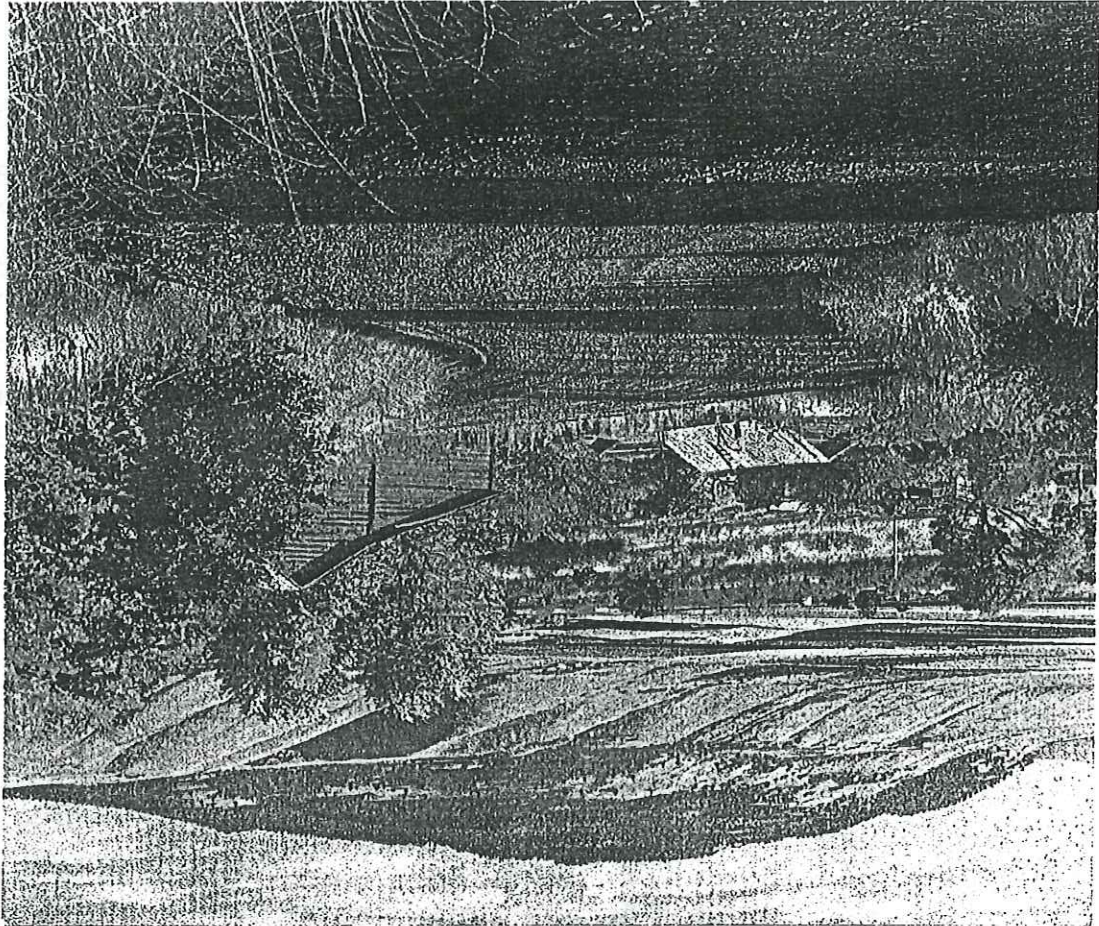


# The Grande Tour

An Oregon Tour Route

Union County, Oregon



## Management Plan

October 8, 1998

La Grande/Union County Visitors & Convention Bureau, Proponent

# THE GRANDE TOUR

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# THE GRANDE TOUR

## Section 1

### Route Description

# THE GRANDE TOUR MANAGEMENT PLAN

## Route Description

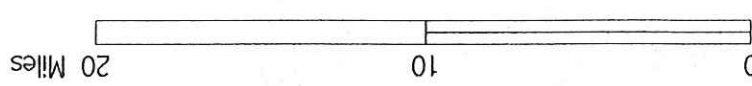
### DRIVING DIRECTIONS:

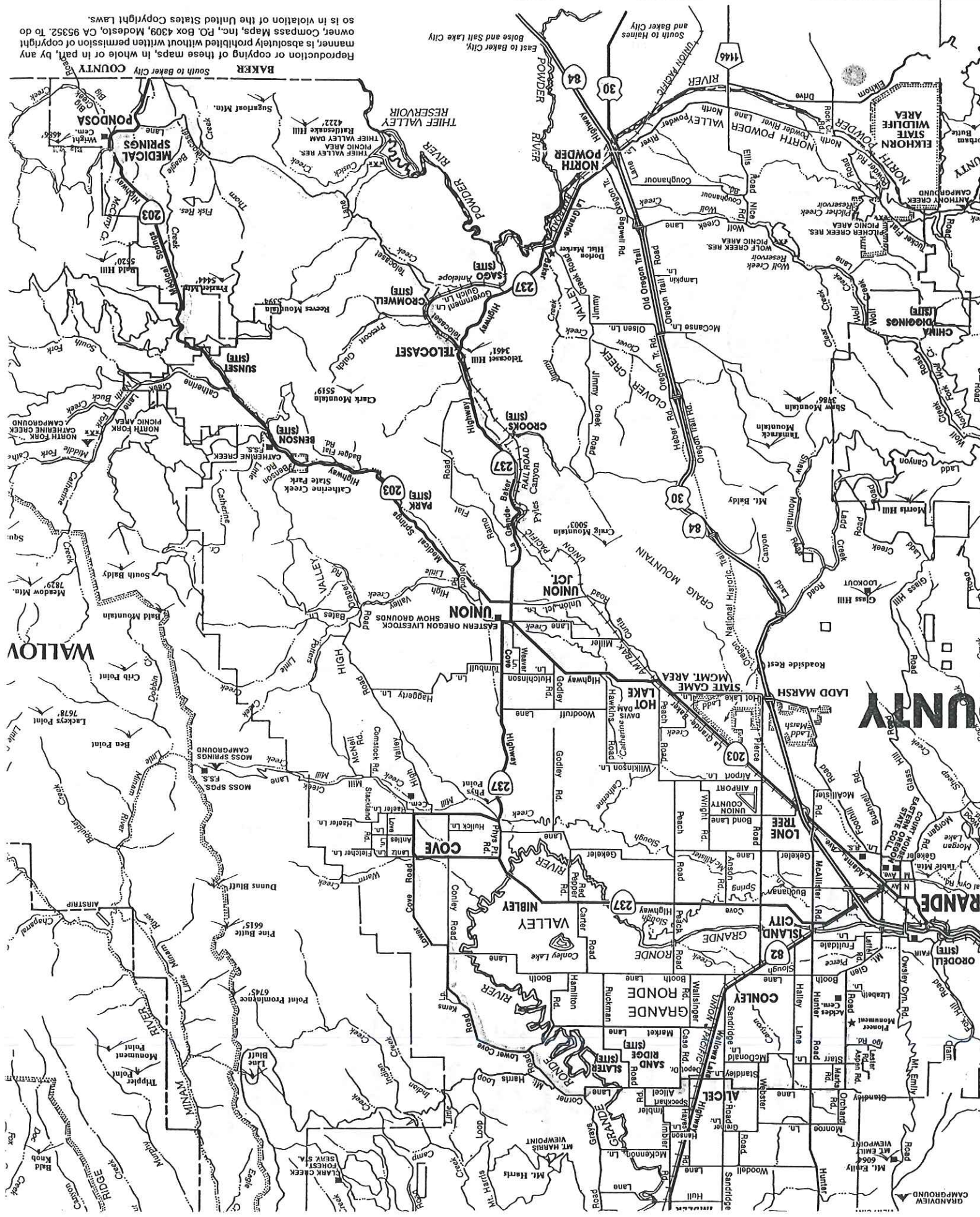
Begin the Grande Tour at the intersection of Fourth and Adams Avenue in Downtown La Grande. From the parking lot of the visitor center, turn right onto Fourth Avenue and follow it up the hill to the intersection with C Avenue. Turn left and continue to the small parking lot of Birnie Park on the right side of the street. After seeing the memorial exhibit at Birnie Park, proceed on C Avenue which soon takes a bend and becomes Gekeler Road. Follow Gekeler about 1 mile and turn right onto Foothill Drive. Follow Foothill Drive four miles as it hugs the base of the hill and winds toward the south. A wildlife viewing sign directs you to a viewpoint overlooking the Ladd Marsh Wildlife Area, the Grande Ronde Valley and the distant peaks of the Wallowa Mountains.

Return to Foothill Drive and follow it across the freeway. An immediate left leads to a parking area and the Ladd Marsh Nature Trail. To continue on the tour route, turn right on Pierce Road then a quick curve to the left on Hot Lake Road. This section of the route is gravel, but it is well maintained and suitable for passenger cars. At the intersection with Oregon Highway 203, turn right and follow the paved highway to the town of Union. Follow the Main Street through the historic downtown and continue south. The highway is now Oregon Highway 237.

Stay on 237 for several miles through Pyles Canyon. Immediately after crossing the railroad overpass turn left on the gravel road that goes through the tiny railroad town, Telocaset. Stay on Telocaset Lane, turning left to cross the railroad. This gravel road will travel for six miles through wide open range country. The gravel road ends at an intersection with Oregon Highway 203, the Medical Springs Highway. Turn left onto the paved road and follow it past over the Catherine Creek Summit, and down the mountain. As you near the town of Union again, turn right on Kofford Rd., then a quick left on High Valley Road. At the east edge of Union, turn right on Cove Highway, Oregon Highway 237, which will take you four miles to Cove. After seeing the historic Ascension Chapel, continue through Cove on Highway 237 for one mile where you leave the highway and travel north along the foothills on paved Lower Cove Road. Follow Lower Cove Road until it intersects with Gray's Corner Road. Turn right onto the gravelled Gray's Corner Road and then left onto Alicel Road and follow it to Oregon Highway 82. Cross Highway 82 at Alicel and continue on what is now called Standley Lane. Stay on Standley until it intersects with Mt. Glen Rd. Turn left onto Mt. Glen and follow it to Riverside Park on the northern edge of La Grande. To reach La Grande's main arterial, travel south on Spruce Street. Turn left at Monroe Ave. which will lead you across the railroad tracks to Island Avenue. A left turn here will take you to Interstate 84. A right turn will lead you through an underpass to Adams Avenue. Turn right on Adams and left onto Fourth Street to return to the Visitors Center.

Union County Or.





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## ROADWAY DESCRIPTIONS

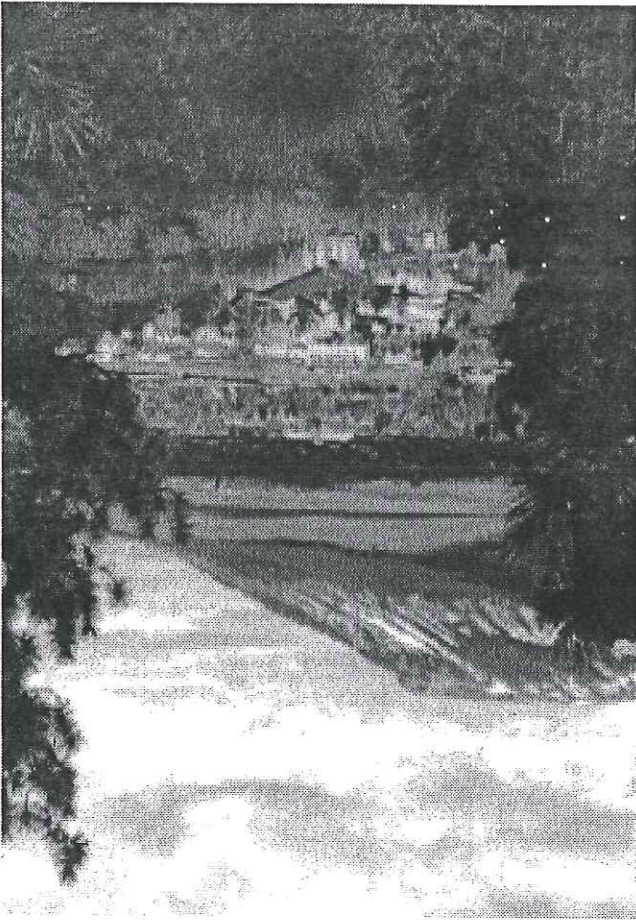
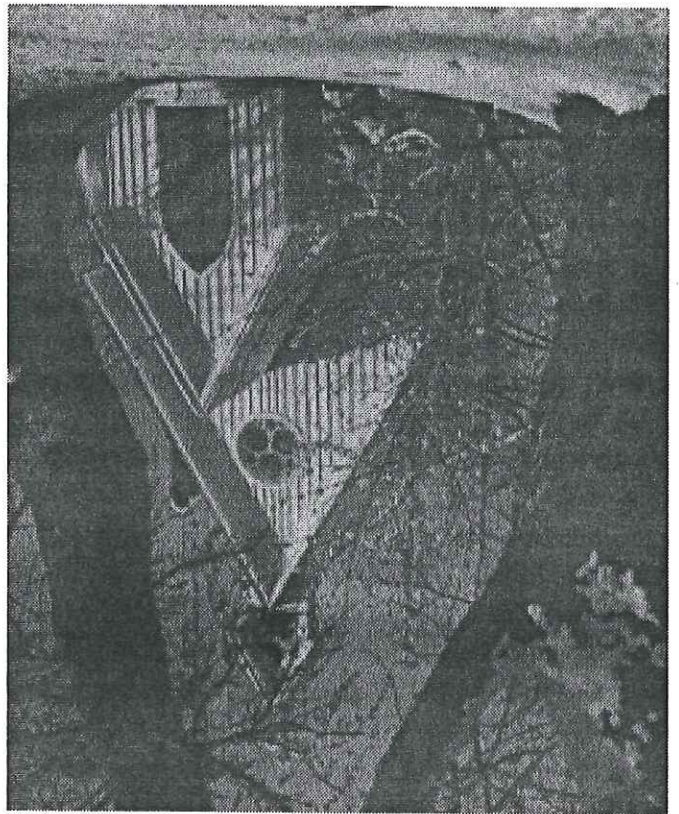
- Type of Surface: ☒ Paved ☒ Gravel ☐ Dirt
- Number of Lanes: ☒ One ☒ Two ☐ Three or more
- Vehicle Limitations: ☒ Suitable for Passenger Cars
  - ☐ High clearance vehicles required
  - ☐ 4WD required
- Seasonal Limitations: ☐ Closed in winter ☒ Occasional closure in bad weather
  - ☐ Open year round

The entire route of the Grande Tour is appropriate for recreation vehicles. Although there are no bike lanes along the route, all paved sections are appropriate and popular for bicycle use. Because of narrow shoulders, caution is required on the sections through Pyles Canyon, south of Union on OR Hwy. 237, and along Catherine Creek on OR Hwy. 203.

## DESCRIPTION OF QUALITIES

**The Scenic Qualities** of the Grande Tour are of statewide significance. Travelers of the route are advised to carry extra rolls of film in order to capture all of the diverse scenes that speak of Eastern Oregon within the ninety-mile drive. Early in the route, a shaded country road winds at the base of the Blue Mountains, past the picturesque barns and historic homes of century farms. The view from the overlook above Ladd Marsh Wildlife Area is exceptional, taking in the shimmering waters and green foliage of the marsh, against a backdrop of farmland, forested hills and snow-tipped peaks of the Wallowa Mountains. Grazing deer and elk, nesting Canada Geese, and singing Meadow Larks complete the magnificent scene. Near the silver waters of Thief Valley Reservoir, cattle graze on steep sage covered hills beneath rugged basalt outcroppings. Deer, elk, and antelope can frequently be seen nearby. Horses and riders herd cattle along dusty trails. Weathered fence posts and rusty wires dissect the vast range into thousand acre pastures. The Elkhorn Ridge of the Blue Mountains commands attention in the distance, standing tall above the patchwork Powder Valley. A curving road climbs to the Catherine Creek summit through pine and fir

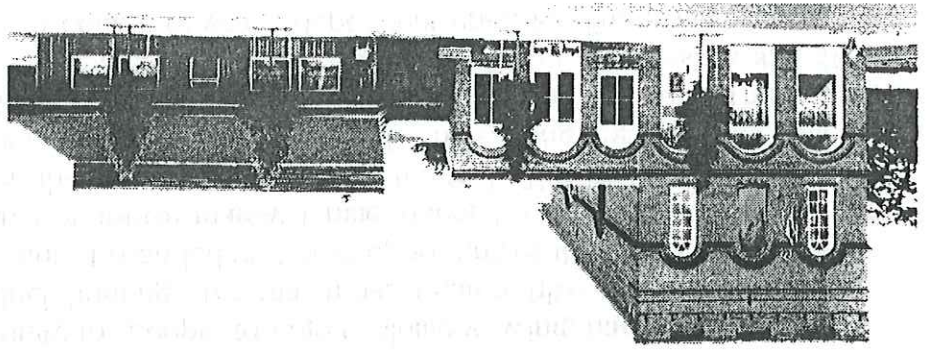
forests, then descends again, passing grassy mountain meadows ringed with timbered hills and following the bubbling sparkling waters of Catherine Creek as it tumbles several miles to the valley and through the town of historic Union. The picturesque Ascension Chapel is the highlight of Cove, a tiny town nestled at the base of Mount Fanny. Built in 1869, the Episcopal church was the subject in the August 1998 issue of Country Magazine as the center-fold "Mystery Photo," a popular feature of the magazine. Cherry orchards bloom along the country road in June. From any vantage point on the eastern edge of the broad Grande Ronde Valley, the brushy banks of the Grande Ronde River mark its course through huge fields, lush with crops and colored with rainbows from circle irrigation sprinklers. The scents of mint, clover, and alfalfa perfume the air.



**Historic Qualities** of the route are of regional and state significance and cover over one-hundred fifty years of Euro-American settlers. A printed guide to the route will provide enough information to please history buffs and an accompanying audio tape will make it easy to drive the route while hearing stories of the past. The first historic site on the tour route is *Birnie Park*, in the oldest section of La Grande. The site of this park was a camping place for wagons traveling on the Oregon Trail. They gathered and rested here before attempting the steep climb up the hill and across the Blue Mountains, often called the most difficult of the two thousand mile journey west to the Willamette Valley. Along *Foothill Drive*, some of the earliest Grande Ronde Valley settlers established farms in the shadow of the Blues. Historic barns and farm homes hug the sides of the winding paved road. The sad ruins of *Hot Lake Resort* always attract the attention of passers by. This huge old brick building is but a fraction of a once sprawling complex alive with hundreds of visitors from around the world who came to "take the waters" and renew their health in the spa/resort/hospital that was also known as the Mayo Clinic of the West. Built in 1906, the resort was in its heyday from 1908 through 1932. The Victorian era town of *Union* offers a step back in time. In 1862, Conrad Miller settled in the area and planted apple and pear trees and began one of the first nurseries in the Grande Ronde Valley. Others settlers soon followed and a town was established. Many of the early settlers around *Union* engaged in the freighting business, yoking their oxen into teams of six and carrying merchandise from *The Dalles* or *Umatilla* to the mines around *Auburn* in *Baker County*. Victorian homes and charming brick buildings still line the main street through town. The city of *Union* recently acquired historic district status and is currently working with local businesses in an effort to restore downtown buildings. The red brick building that anchors the *Union County Museum* is known by locals as the *Old First National Bank Building*. The *Union County Museum* recently acquired the **Cowboys Then & Now** exhibit, formerly housed in *Portland*. This fascinating collection of Cowboy artifacts and memorabilia traces the history of cowboys and cattle in America. The *Oregon State University Agriculture Experiment Station*, which conducts research in the area, was built in 1901 and was the first in the state to be developed and operated by *Oregon Agricultural College*. The site was once the farm of *Charles Elliott Davis*, a prominent *Union County* agriculturalist and miller who went on to become governor. The building is listed in the *State Registry of Historic Buildings*. Tours are available. A noteworthy structure in downtown *Union* is the *Union Library*, built in 1912, with a \$5,000 matching fund from the *Carnegie Foundation*. It still serves as a library for the residents of *Union*. Also of interest is the *Union Hotel*, built in 1924. The hotel saw several years of hard times before it was recently purchased and renovated. Narrow and edged by jagged basalt cliffs,



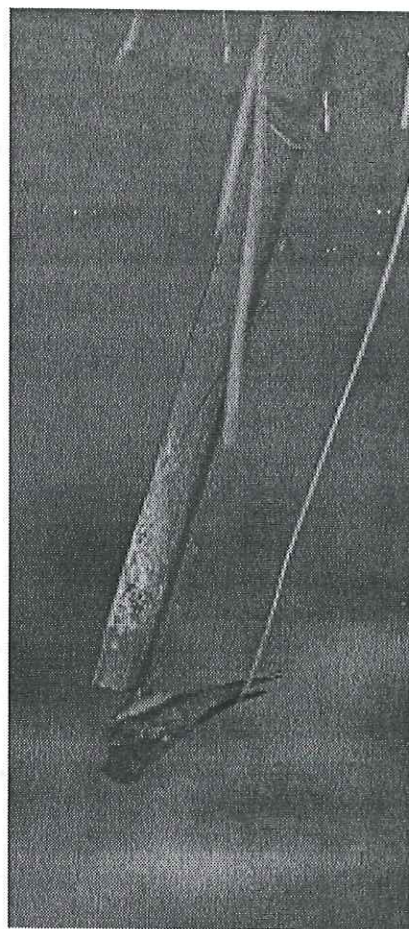
*Pyle's Canyon* was an alternate route around the mountain pass for pioneers on the *Oregon Trail*. This important route for travel to and from the east was a toll road constructed through the bottom of the canyon in 1864 by *J. M. Pyle*.



Mr. Pyle was an early member of the state legislature; the first Senator from Union County. After he died, the county tried to purchase the road. They were unable to agree on terms with the Pyle estate so they built another road above it. After the new county road was completed, the Pyle estate agreed to sell the toll road. Telocaset was pronounced by the Indians as "Taullekarset" and is of Nez Perce origin, meaning "on the top". It marks the crest on the railroad grade between the Grande Ronde and Powder River Valleys. In early stagecoach days this place was called Antelope Station. The Telocaset post office was established in 1885. *Thief Valley* was named after John Wetherly, who was accused of stealing four mules from an emigrant at Boise and subsequently hanged there by vigilantes in December of 1864. The Thief Valley Reservoir, formed by a dam on the Powder River, is a popular place to windsurf or fish. *Medical Springs* was established around 1868 by Dunham Wright, a cousin to Abraham Lincoln and an early state politician. Medical Springs was a popular hotel and hot springs resort in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The picturesque *Ascension Chapel* is the highlight of Cove, a tiny town nestled at the base of Mount Fanny. Built in 1869, the Episcopal church was the subject in the August 1998 issue of Country Magazine as the center-fold "Mystery Photo," a popular feature of the magazine. The Ascension Chapel has been visited by such esteemed guests as Desmond Tutu and the previous Episcopal Church Presiding Bishop, Edmund Browning, who visited the Cove chapel on more than one occasion. Just two blocks from the tour route, the Historic Cove Hot Springs Swimming Pool and picnic area provides an excellent stopping place for both children and adults. Long before the beginning of migration on the Oregon Trail, mountain men wintered around the mineral spring that now feeds the pool. The pool is open daily from May to Labor Day. *Ackles Cemetery*, on Mt. Glen Rd., was established in 1866 and contains the graves of some of the Grande Ronde Valleys earliest settlers.

## Natural Qualities are of regional significance. Volcanic

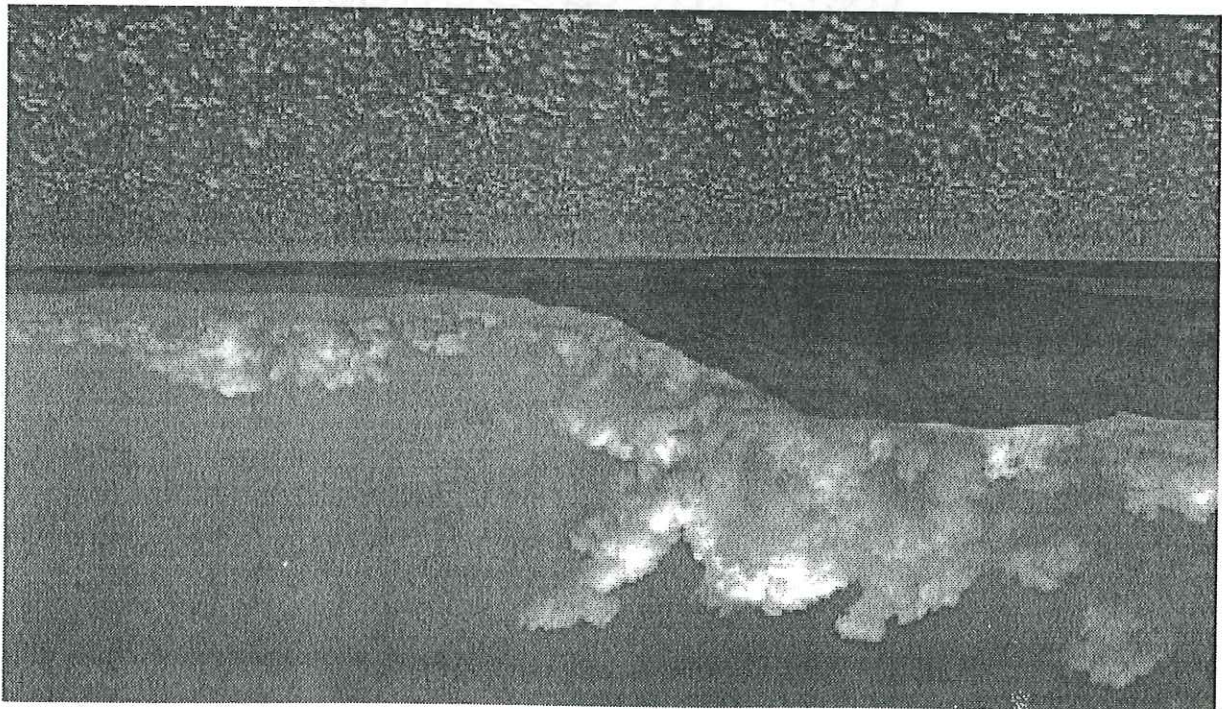
action, block faulting, and glaciers formed the Grande Ronde Valley and the surrounding mountains. The result of all that earth moving is a landscape rich in diversity. Towering peaks comprised mostly of granite are visible in the distance from many vantage points along the Grande Tour route. Millions of years ago, large blocks of rock gradually slid into the earth, leaving ragged cliffs of Columbia River Basalt standing above the valley. Now colorfully covered with lichen, the cliffs guard the many creeks and rivers that tumble from mountain top to valley floor and eventually to the Columbia River and Pacific Ocean. Glacial rock ground into loess and carried to the valley floor by wind and water, makes up much of the rich soil that is farmed in the valley. Ladd Marsh Wildlife Area provides excellent opportunity for people to enjoy wildlife viewing, bird watching and duck hunting. The marsh has a nature hike and excellent view point. Expanded visitation opportunities through a new nature trail of approximately 1 mile in length with small interpretive signs on the flora and fauna along the trail. This trail will be accessed directly off the tour route. Also new along the tour route will be 150 acres of additional wetland ponds and marshes. There may also be a driving tour through a section of the marsh within the next couple of years, dependent upon funding availability.



## Agriculture/Forestry Qualities

are of regional and state significance. Agriculture is a major component of the economic structure in Union County. This pocket of fertile farm ground grows a huge variety of crops including wheat, oats, barley, grass seed, hay, seed potatoes, cherries, peppermint, peas, garbanzo beans, sugar beets, and evening primroses are crops grown in the rich fields of Union County. In addition, cattle, sheep, horses, emus, and llamas are raised in the valley and the surrounding hills. The Grande Tour route shows visitors this wide diversity in Union County's agricultural product. Part of the planned interpretation for the route includes signs identifying and explaining many of the crops and agriculture traditions.

Like agriculture, forestry has long played an important roll in the Union County economy. While logging activity and the production of wood products have been significantly reduced in recent years, they remain one of the largest employment sectors for the county. The Grande Tour passes through a segment of mixed conifer forest, including a stand of timber owned by the Oregon State University Agriculture Experiment Station. This plot is undergoing experimental timber management to determine which methods of timber harvest best meet the objectives of producing good forage along with sustainable timber harvest. The impact of grazing on upland meadows and fish habitat is also studied here, sometimes with surprising results. Farther down the road, the route passes the Hall Ranch, also owned by the Experiment Station, where research into range, grassland, and forest management for the production of beef cattle is conducted. The Experiment Station headquarters, where tours are offered, are located in the town of Union. This section of the tour also passes through a portion of the Walllawa-Whitman National Forest and by several trailheads that access the Eagle Cap Wilderness. Hiking, camping and fishing are very popular activities along this section of the route in the warmer months. In winter, a SnoPark serves snowmobilers, cross-country skiers, and sledgers.



# THE GRANDE TOUR

## Section 2 Management Plan

**VISION:** The Grande Tour showcases the broad diversity of landscape, history, and culture in Union County. The tour begins and ends in La Grande, the largest city and center for commerce, education, and state government in a three county area. Visitors drive through fertile farmlands, rugged sage-covered range lands and lush green forests. Rivers, creeks, and a reservoir add beauty to the route and reflect the importance of life-giving water to the livelihood of all of the area's residents; wild and domestic.

Used by Native Americans as summer pasture for their horses and a place for gathering winter stores of berries and camas root, the valley was first seen by people of European descent when the Wilson Price Hunt Expedition passed through in the winter of 1811-12. Emigrants passed this way during the great migration on the Oregon Trail. A section of the tour route follows the famous trail where it wound its way along the valley perimeter before climbing the steep wall of the Blue Mountains. Settlement of the valley began in the second half of the nineteenth century when farmers, ranchers, and freight companies found a near market serving the newly discovered gold mines in Baker and Grant counties. A pioneer staging site, Century Farms, a turn-of-the-century resort of national renown, an historic chapel, and the Union County Museum highlight the area's rich history. Interpretive signs and a tour route guide will tell the stories of many sites along the route.

## **GOALS:**

1. **Strengthen Local Economies.** Attract visitors off the freeway and into the communities along the route. Provide opportunity for businesses to capture visitor dollars.

2. **Build a Bridge Between Urban and Rural Residents.** The division between big-city dwellers and residents of rural areas widens. Facilitate an appreciation for and understanding of the rural lifestyle and its dependence upon caring for the natural environment. Provide rural dwellers with the opportunity to better understand the interests and concerns of urbanites.

3. **Preserve and maintain the area's history.** Raise the awareness of and support for local historical preservation efforts. Provide encouragement and impetus for projects that improve the historic integrity and attractiveness of buildings and sites along the route. Improve the quality and accuracy of historic interpretation in local publications and exhibits.

4. **Provide opportunities for education.** Work with organizations and individuals to provide high quality educational tours and projects along the route.

## **OBJECTIVES:**

1. **Strengthen Local Economies.**

a. Bring new customers to restaurants, service stations, accommodations, and retail businesses. Give those businesses reason to upgrade the attractiveness of their buildings and help them choose merchandise that will appeal to visitors as well as residents. Communities impacted by the route are La Grande, Union, Medical Springs/Pondosa, and Cove.

b. Attract new and the expansion of existing businesses and products for the increased visitor trade.

- c. Provide new venues for businesses to promote their visitor services and products.
- d. Support downtown revitalization that will make historic downtowns more appealing and better able to capture visitor dollars and serve residents with expanded products.

## 2. Build a Bridge Between Urban and Rural Residents.

- a. Encourage and support community events and activities that provide the opportunity for visitors and residents to mingle and get to know each other.
- b. Provide interpretation of crops, methods of farming and forestry practices.
- c. Strongly promote respect for private property and sensitivity to the privacy of residents along the route.

## 3. Preserve and maintain the area's history.

- a. Increase visitorship at Union County Museum through higher volume of traffic passing by and more visibility in publications. Encourage expanded hours of operation of museum.
- b. Interpret area history on signs placed at key sites along the route.
- c. Publish a written guide and audio tape guide highlighting the stories and interesting historical notes along the route and the surrounding area. Insist on historical accuracy and quality of interpretation in all materials and associated activities.

## 4. Provide opportunities for education.

- a. Work with the agriculture community to provide signs that identify crops grown along the route and to develop interpretive materials and signs. Encourage the ag community to put together tours for school children and teachers.
  - b. Promote and market the route to the national group tour industry in conjunction with agriculture, forestry, and experiment station tours.
  - c. Develop interpretive signage for the Ladd Marsh Wildlife Area overlook.
- Continue to work with the Oregon Fish & Wildlife Department to increase the opportunity for people to use and learn from the Ladd Marsh Wildlife Area.
- d. Use the tour route as the focal point for coordinating educational opportunities concerning the wide variety of historic and nature based sites along the route.

## **PROTECTION STRATEGY**

The majority of lands along this route are privately owned, in the form of large ranches and farms. Most of these lands are protected by Oregon's strong zoning laws that protect agricultural lands from commercial or residential development. Included in this plan is a map of the land use planning zones of Union County. There are no significant changes to the zoning under way or planned at this time.

The scenic qualities will be managed through the county's land use regulations, as most of the tour route is adjacent to privately owned lands. There will be some "natural protection" because much of the scenery is layered and many miles in the distance. Some of the scenic qualities will be combined with the other three categories of qualities at particular points of interest. These include the Ladd Marsh viewing area, the Hot Lake Resort, Union County Museum, the Oregon State University Ag Experimental Station, and the Historic Union Hotel. These will be protected by the on-site managers by enforcing their rules for the particular site or attraction.

The historic qualities are primarily owned by private enterprises or non-profit organizations. These enterprises are responsible for the protection strategy of each individual

Natural qualities are protected primarily through land use regulations and private ownership and the state and county land use management process. Because most of the land adjacent the route is privately owned, general public access is not permitted without permission from owners. In recent years, Catherine Creek State Park has undergone extensive streambank restoration and the development of a hiking trail along the creek. The ag/forestry qualities are protected by the management practices of the private owners, the land use management process, and the management plans of the corresponding public land management agencies. The public lands are managed by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife at Ladd Marsh, a very small segment of the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest near the Catherine Creek Summit, the Oregon Department of Parks and Recreation at Catherine Creek State Park, and the Oregon State University Ag Experiment Station.

## **ENHANCEMENT STRATEGY**

In addition to installation of interpretive signs and crop identification signs along the route, some exciting projects are currently under way or in the planning stages:

**Ladd Marsh Wildlife Area:** A kiosk or shelter will be installed at the overlook of the wildlife area, which will include interpretive information on the marsh project, the history of the marsh area, the vast array of birds, waterfowl, and wildlife to be seen in the marsh, and future plans for management of the marsh. In addition, Ladd Marsh is developing 150 acres of additional wetlands and ponds adjacent to Hot Lake Road, and a new nature trail in the same area. **Historic Union Hotel:** The hotel, built in 1923, continues to undergo restoration by its owners. In the past three years, eight guest rooms have been renovated, each receiving a unique decorating theme. The beautiful lobby and salon have been lovingly restored and a restaurant now operates just off the lobby. The hotel has become popular with travelers and the news media and was recently the subject of a half-hour program on the Home & Garden Network. **Union County Museum:** The museum is in an expanding mode. A new outdoor agriculture and forestry exhibit is being installed, with completion planned over the next two to three years.

**Union Municipal Golf Course:** The public golf course will begin construction in 1999. Play should begin on the course in late summer, 2000.

**Catherine Creek Summit SnoPark:** The parking lot at the summit is under expansion this fall. An improved restroom was installed earlier this year.

**Fire Station Museum, Downtown Public Art, and Railroad Museum:** Three committees in La Grande are working on some projects that will greatly enhance the city's historic downtown where the tour route begins. Installation of art projects in the downtown will begin in 1999, with several projects to be completed within three years. The Fire Station Museum and the Railroad Depot Museum could be completed in three to five years.

Only a few improvements are planned along the route, due to the majority of adjacent properties being under private ownership and due to budget constraints in those portions managed by public agencies. However, we hope to add bike lanes on some sections of the route when funding acquisitions allow.

## INTERPRETIVE STRATEGY

The rich and diverse cultural history of the area is the overall interpretive theme of The Grande Tour. Information will weave the diversity of the landscape with the variety of uses of the land from presettlement to modern times.

| Feature                | Existing Facilities                                                                                                         | Media<br>Planned Enhancement<br>Story                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Birnie Park            | City park with columns commemorating pioneer struggle over Blue Mtns.                                                       | Interpretive sign<br>Pioneer wagon staging area on Oregon Trail. interpretation of columns                                                                                                                                          |
| Ladd Marsh<br>Overlook | viewpoint                                                                                                                   | Interpretive kiosk<br>or shelter<br>History of Marsh area and how the area would have appeared to pioneers descending into the valley in the 1840-50's. Story of modern marsh project with farmers and city of LG treated effluent. |
| Hot Lake Resort        | Brick ruins of popular early 20th Century health spa/hospital/resort. Hot mineral water ponds. No interpretive information. | Interpretive sign<br>History of the resort. Place sign at entry if possible.                                                                                                                                                        |
| City of Union          | City limit sign                                                                                                             | Entry sign to Victorian era small city with historic district and many historic homes and buildings.                                                                                                                                |
| Pyles Canyon           | Pullout                                                                                                                     | Interpretive sign in narrow canyon through which highway passes.<br>The geology and history of the canyon. Include information about ranching in the area, from small family operations to the giant Seven Diamond Cattle Company.  |

|                                            |      |                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|--------------------------------------------|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Thief Valley                               |      | Interpretive sign at Turn off that leads down to the Thief Valley Reservoir and dam. Overlooks vast, many-layered scene with distant mountain range, rugged high hills, and small valley. | The geographical elements of the scene, including the Elkhorn Ridge of the Blue Mountains, the Powder River, the Thief Valley Reservoir, and the vast range lands in the foreground. Look for Pronghorns, Mule Deer, and other wildlife that are frequently seen there. Include info on the land's use for cattle grazing. | History of Medical Springs and Pondosa. Belt of hot springs through area. Mention of the historic Pondosa Store for a pitstop. | A sign at Hall Ranch on the research at the site and its ties to agriculture and OSU. Grazing, watershed, and timber management methods are studied on the ranch. | Crop identification signs on fences bordering many fields along the route through cooperation with Farm Bureau and farmers. | Geology of the valley, historic changes in the landscape (State Ditch), contemporary watershed enhancement projects and modern methods of irrigation and farming, and the crops grown. |
| Thief Valley Road-Medical Springs Junction | None | Interpretive sign                                                                                                                                                                         | History of Medical Springs and Pondosa. Belt of hot springs through area. Mention of the historic Pondosa Store for a pitstop.                                                                                                                                                                                             | Ag Experiment Station Forest Plot                                                                                              | Identifying sign                                                                                                                                                  | Crop signs                                                                                                                  | Farms and Geology of Grande Ronde Valley                                                                                                                                               |
|                                            | None | Interpretive sign                                                                                                                                                                         | History of Medical Springs and Pondosa. Belt of hot springs through area. Mention of the historic Pondosa Store for a pitstop.                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                | Identifying sign                                                                                                                                                  | Crop signs                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|                                            | None | Interpretive sign                                                                                                                                                                         | History of Medical Springs and Pondosa. Belt of hot springs through area. Mention of the historic Pondosa Store for a pitstop.                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                | Interpretive sign.                                                                                                                                                | Crop signs                                                                                                                  | Interpretive sign on Lower Cove Road                                                                                                                                                   |
|                                            | None | Interpretive sign at Turn off that leads down to the Thief Valley Reservoir and dam. Overlooks vast, many-layered scene with distant mountain range, rugged high hills, and small valley. | the land's use for cattle grazing.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                        |

|                                      |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Mt. Glen Rd. Cemetery                |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |  |
| None. Pioneer marker down road.      |  | None                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |  |
| Interpretive sign near entrance      |  | A written guide to the tour route; also available on audio tape.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  |
| History of settlement in the valley. |  | The history, anecdotal stories, and descriptions of sites along the route. Three side trips will be described in the guide - the North Fork of Catherine Creek, the Moss Springs trailhead and campground, and the Mt. Harris Loop Road, which provides outstanding views of the Grande Ronde Valley. |  |

## **ROADWAY STRATEGY**

The two road authorities, Union County, and the Oregon Department of Transportation, will continue to maintain the tour route in its existing or better condition. The paved sections will continue to be patched and shoulders bladed while the gravel portions will continue to be bladed. There are no major surface or road improvements planned. The Telocaset to Medical Springs gravel section is not recommended for winter or early spring use.

## **OUTDOOR ADVERTISING CONTROL STRATEGY**

Outside of the city limits of La Grande, Union, Cove, and Alicel, there are no areas of the route that allow for new outdoor advertising signs. Sign control ordinances within the City of La Grande limit signs to commercial and industrial zoned areas, of which very few exist on the route. State highway ordinances regulate the use of signs in Union and Cove, which are very small communities.

## **SIGN STRATEGY**

ODOT and Union County have been contacted as road authorities responsible for signage. Installation of the signs has been agreed upon. Maintenance of the signs will be handled jointly by the proponent, road authorities, and a local youth group. Preliminary plans for placement of the signs have been made by the proponent and the county road authority and will be confirmed at a later date.

## **IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW COMMITTEE**

The key contacts and committee members for the Grande Tour Route are as follows:  
Proponent: La Grande/Union County Visitors & Conventions Bureau, Janet Dodson, ED  
Union County Road Authority: Rich Comstock, Projects Coordinator, Rena' Morrow  
Oregon Department of Transportation: Chuck Howe, Environmental Coordinator, Region 5  
Oregon Department of Transportation: Mike Buchanan, District 13 Manager  
City of La Grande: Wes Hare, Manager  
City of Union: Leonard Almqvist, Administrator  
City of Cove: John Van Schoonhoven, Community Development Committee  
Ladd Marsh Wildlife Area: Dave Larsen, Manager  
In addition to sub-committees, which will meet to work on different aspects of implementing the project, the review committee will meet as needed to review the content and design of the interpretive signs and the printed guide. After the enhancement projects are completed, the committee will meet at least once a year to explore other possible enhancements, improvements, or challenges along the route. Meetings will take place as needed to further address issues or opportunities that arise.

## **MARKETING STRATEGY**

The Grande Tour will be marketed as a component of the marketing program of the La Grande/Union County Visitors & Conventions Bureau. The VCB will use several methods of promoting the route. The most frequently successful marketing opportunity will be face-to-face selling of the route to visitors to the Visitor Center. These people are often looking for interesting things to see and do and are particularly interested in the learning about the surrounding area. Promotional materials for the route will be included in all visitor packets sent to people who request visitor information via phone calls, writing, e-mail, or publication reader

response cards. Such requests are usually prompted by advertising the VCB places in magazines with state and regional readership, such as Northwest Travel Magazine, Oregon Outside Magazine, Journeys Magazine, and Travelyn'. Requests also come from people who plan to visit the area and want information on lodging and things to see and do. Travelers who request pre-planning information or who visit Visitor Centers tend to be travelers who have the interest, time, and money to spend exploring an area's historical and other points of interest. These travelers are usually over fifty, educated, and financially secure - our best market for tourism in Union County.

The VCB is currently involved in the Oregon Tourism Commission's *Quality Service Initiative* program. QSI research concerning La Grande shows a desire for more things to do in the vicinity and strong interest in the county's scenery and rural culture. Hospitality training workers learn about to promote the route to visitors. Two of the four other main attractions in Union County, the Union County Museum and Ladd Marsh Wildlife Area, are on the tour route. The most important tool for attracting visitors to the Grande Tour route will be the Oregon Tourism Commission's brochures, the Official Oregon Travel Guide, and Off The Beaten Freeway, OTC's scenic byway and tour route brochure. Information listed in these two award winning publications will reach out to the many thousands of people who respond to Oregon Tourism advertisements or pick up the brochures at venues all across the state. The Grande Tour will be included in the next printing of the Guide to Union County's Adventures & Attractions, our most widely used promotional material. The VCB is currently developing a web site, on which in-depth information and maps of the tour route will be included. It will also be included in the next reprint of the Eastern Oregon Visitors Guide, an attractive and widely used guide to all of Eastern Oregon published by the Eastern Oregon Visitor Association, our regional marketing organization.

The VCB has a public relations program that includes a media kit containing story ideas and press releases. The first article on the tour route project was published September 30 in the La Grande Observer. We will be pursuing publication of additional stories in local and regional newspapers and magazines as the route is developed and open for use.

## FUNDING STRATEGY

| Item                             | Estimated Cost                              | Funding Source                                                                          | When Funding Available                                                         |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Signs                            | \$5,000                                     | LG/UC VCB = \$1,500<br>Union County = \$1,800<br>Union County = \$1,500<br>Cove = \$200 | in '98/99 budget<br>in-kind labor as needed<br>Requested<br>Upon request       |
| Interpretive signs<br>\$800 each | \$5,000 first phase<br>\$3,000 second phase | OTC Small Grants<br>Cove = \$100<br>Union = \$300<br>La Grande = \$1,000<br>TBD         | Application Due 12/4/98<br>Upon request<br>Upon request<br>'99/2000 VCB budget |
| Marketing Strategy               | \$750                                       | LG/UC VCB = \$500<br>Guide Ad sales = \$250                                             | in '98/99 budget<br>spring '99                                                 |