

# Columbia River Heritage Trail Sign Report

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Report prepared by the Morrow County  
Planning Department.



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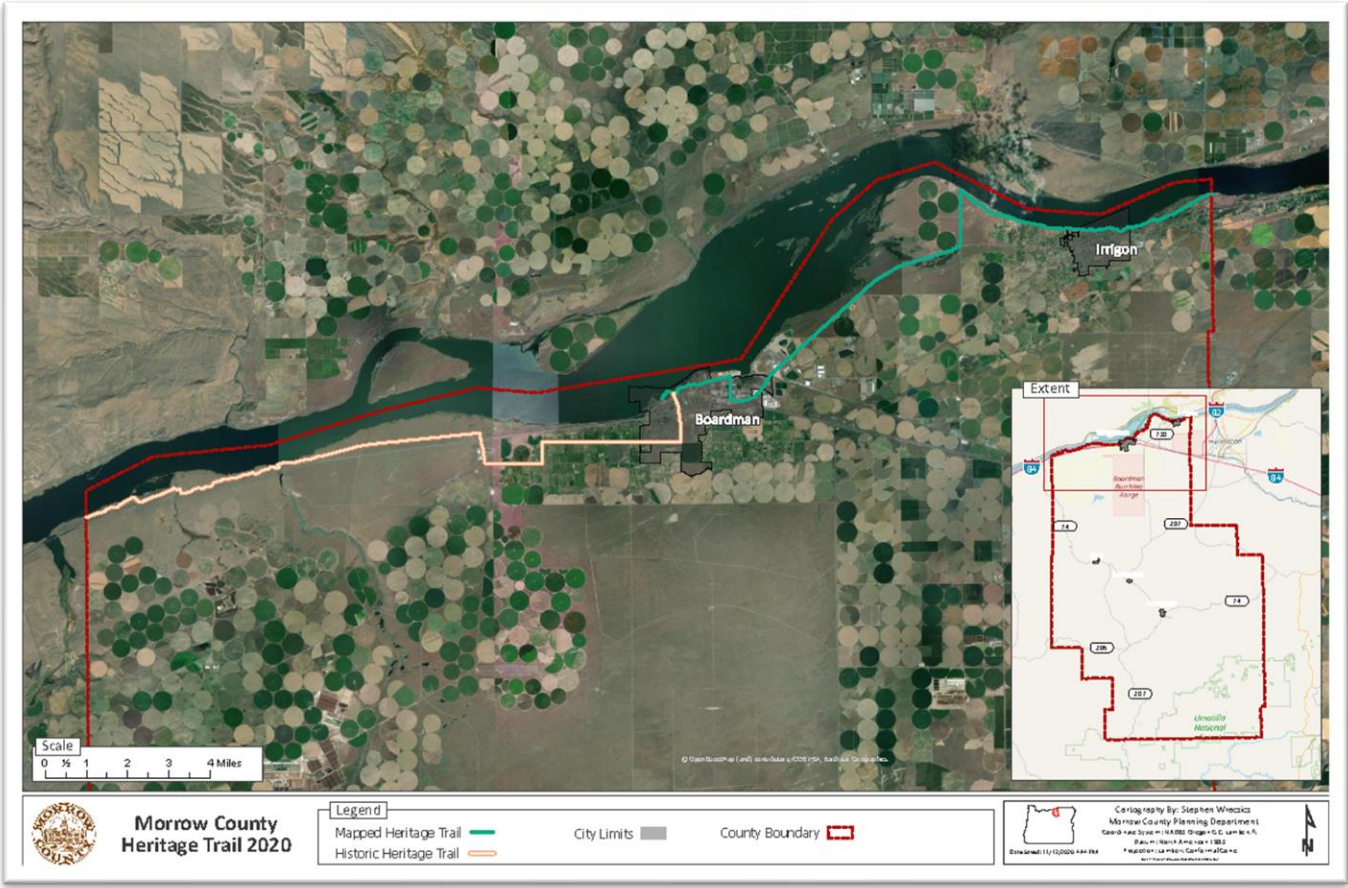
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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Heritage Trail has provided approximately 25 miles of trail for walkers, bicyclists, and other non-motorized travelers and recreationalists a chance to embrace the rich history and outdoor environment of the area. The trail alignment accomplishes this by travelling through a variety of natural and constructed landscapes. Unfortunately, due to the length of time the trail markers have been out on the trail many have faded and are unrecognizable and others have been damaged or disappeared. This report includes an inventory and description of the trail markers throughout the length of the trail.



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## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

This report represents the efforts and cooperation of a number of organizations and agencies working together to improve preparedness for wildfire events while reducing risk factors. Morrow County would like to thank our partners listed below for their work and commitment on the 2019 Morrow County Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

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## **BACKGROUND**

The *Columbia River Heritage Trail* roughly parallels the Columbia River, the most significant waterway in the Northwest. The area is rich in both natural and cultural resources which fed the spiritual and material lives of Native Americans for centuries, and continues to enrich the lives of residents today. The area contains a national and state wildlife refuge and several Lewis and Clark historical sites. The trail also travels near agricultural lands and through the Port of Morrow Industrial Park.

Planning for this trail dates back to the mid-1990s with the original concept plan being completed and adopted in 2001. The adoption of a concept plan for the trail has guided much of the process since. Although not legally binding, this has been the foundation which all *Heritage Trail* projects have been based.

Trail markers and interpretive panels were purchased beginning in 2000 and installed over a two-year period, with most signs being in place by the end of 2002. For two decades these signs have served to guide and educate trail goers. Trail markers provide directions and are in addition to the interpretive panels that are located throughout the trail.

Improving trail signs in high traffic areas is the first step to increasing accessibility. These new trail markers will likely increase the ease of use especially for non-seasoned trail goers. Another related project is the restoration and/or replacement of interpretive panels which have played a large part in the appeal of the Heritage trail by adding an educational element to the trail.

It is anticipated that the land section managers will be in charge of replacing their respective trail markers and interpretive panels.

The Heritage Trail includes a total of six sections.

This report only displays signs that have been damaged, vandalized, or otherwise defaced. Other trail signs that are in good condition may be referenced but will not be the subject of analysis in the Trail Marker Analysis section. These are included as a part of the inventory for their category of signage.

Goals for the Columbia River Heritage Trail Marker Report are:

- Goal 1.
  - Inventory all signs on the C.R.H.T.
- Goal 2.
  - Develop an inventory and analysis of damaged signs
- Goal 3.
  - Help Promote Use
- Goal 4
  - Create clarity and continuity throughout the Columbia River Heritage Trail

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## TRAIL MARKER ANALYSIS

### SECTION II

Section two of the Heritage Trail goes through the city of Boardman. Trail markers in this section begin in the Boardman Marina Park and continue throughout to Olson Road. There is a total of four trail markers and two interpretive panels in Section II. There is also an access point sign which is not displayed because it is in excellent condition. Due to weathering and fading these will need to be replaced. One of the trail markers has been spray painted and should have the metal placard replaced. Two of the three interpretive panels should also be replaced due to sun and weather damage. These interpretive panels include the “Industrial Development & Port of Morrow” and “Birds of River, Shoreline” signs. Below are pictures of the markers that have some damage and warrant replacement or some level of restoration. While there are Port of Morrow signs listed on posts later in the section, it is still part of section two based off of maps from the concept plan adopted in 2001.



**Figure 1:** Located at Boardman marina park

The trail marker shown in Figure 1 will require new stickers to be posted on the metal placard. The sticker “Columbia River Heritage Trail” and “City of Boardman” have faded.

The Birds of River, Shoreline interpretive panel shows signs of extreme weather damage. This sign is located in a key spot along the river and without any restorative measures this sign will continue to be an eye-sore for those using this portion of the Heritage Trail. Subsequently, this interpretive panel now fails to educate trail goers on it's given material.



Figure 2: located at 45.846917° N and 119.701429° W



The next trail marker is halfway through section two, near the Port of Morrow offices. Although this is posted near the offices, it still falls within the borders of section two of the *Heritage Trail* as described in the concept plan. This sign will need to be replaced due to vandalism. It has been spray painted and part of the sign is no longer visible. This post is missing a *CRHT* which could be added to maintain consistency with Boardman Parks and Recreation District.



**Figure 3:** located at 45.846917° N and 119.701429° W

### SECTION III

Section three of the *Columbia River Heritage Trail* traverses the industrial park of the Port of Morrow. This section contains three trail markers, a single interpretive panel, and no access point signs.

The first trail sign that can be found in this section of the *Heritage Trail* is an interpretive panel. This panel depicts some of the industrial development that has taken place in the Port of Morrow. This sign has suffered from damage due to the intense sun exposure it receives. The text from the panel will need to be replaced. The rest of this sign is in good condition showing no evidence of vandalism (see fig. 4).



**Figure 4:** Industrial Development & Port of Morrow located at 45.848753° N and 119.688655° W



Directly adjacent to the interpretive panel, this trail marker sign has been partially “sun washed.” While this sign can still be used to navigate this portion of the trail, it would be beneficial to replace the logo sticker (see fig. 5).



Figure 5: located at 45.850999° N & 119.675869° W



The second trail marker in this section is located at the corner of Ulman Boulevard and Columbia Avenue. This sign will need to have its logo sticker replaced because of the sun damage it has received. While this sign is still visible it no longer fits within the goals outlined at the beginning of this report – goal three, help promote use. This specific sign is in an area where Port and employees in the industrial area could begin their walk of the *Heritage Trail* (see fig. 6).



Figure 6: located at 45.842967°N & 119.675778°W

## SECTION IV

Section four of the Heritage Trail is located within the Umatilla Wildlife Refuge. This section includes six trail marker signs, two interpretive panels, a single access point sign for a total of seven points of interest. All of Section IV is located in the Umatilla National Wildlife Refuge. All *CRHT* marker signs in this section are in good condition, showing little to no sign of age or weather. Damaged signs in this section include one of the two interpretive panels and an access point sign.

The interpretive panel located at the western access point of the trail on the Refuge has multiple gunshot holes. (see fig.7 below). This makes for an unsalvageable base plate on this sign. There will need to be a new base plate installed and a new map placed.



**Figure 7:** located at 45.878897° N and 119.610537° W



The range birds interpretive panel has suffered from sun damage. This can be fixed by new graphics being inserted. The rest of this sign and the sign structure is in good condition (see fig. 8).



Figure 8: located at 45.885790° N and 119.597867° W

## SECTION V

Section V of the *Heritage Trail*, better known as the City of Irrigon section, begins near the fish hatcheries and continues to the edge of the Irrigon Marina Park. Signs begin near the boat launch in the marina and are placed throughout the rest of the area. Section managers include, the Army Corp of Engineers (ACOE), and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW). Many of the trail markers in this section have suffered from a significant weathering. The first of these damaged signs is in the parking lot of the boat launch at the marina park. This weather damage is significant and the text on the decal is no longer visible (see figure 9).



**Figure 9:** located at 45.901175° N and 119.492282° W



This trail marker sign is located only a few yards away from the previous and suffers from many of the same weathering effects. There is no longer any visible text on this decal and there is what appears to be white paint covering some part of the graphic (see figure 10).



**Figure 10:** located at 45.900720° N and 119.492230° W

On the east side of the Irrigon boat launch area there is another trail marker and two interpretive panels. This trail marker sign suffers from similar general wear and tear that is seen on other signs in this area. This sign, however, has not experienced the same level of weather exposure as other signs in this area (see fig. 11).



Figure 11: located at 45.900650° N and 119.490882° W



The two interpretive panels in the Irrigon marina area are next to the Lewis and Clark Memorial bench. These two signs have serious sun damage and have become difficult to read. There is nothing on these interpretive panels which directly connects them to the C.R.H.T. Where this area is owned by the ACOE and managed by Irrigon Parks District a consultation with ACOE and environmental applications will be required before replacing any structure that impacts that includes ground disturbance (see fig. 12).



**Figure 12:** located at 45.901210° N and 119.490868° W



This next trail marker, like others, will need to have the graphic replaced because of sun exposure. Unlike the other signs in this area, there are some trees that partially block the sign. Removing overgrowth would enhance visibility and accessibility of this section (see fig. 13).



**Figure 13:** located at 45.900936° N and 119.490501° W



Further east from figure 13, the next sign is an interpretive panel that will need to have its content replaced. There is a significant amount of the original graphic that is missing and what is left has suffered from sun exposure. There will also need to be a new protective shield installed on this sign. All other parts of this panel seem to be in good condition (see figure 14).



**Figure 14:** located at 45.901096° N and 119.487991° W

Approximately 200 feet further east is another trail marker site (see figure 15). This sign will need only the Columbia River Heritage Trail sticker replaced. While replacing the sticker for this sign it could also be set upright since it is leaning to the side currently. However, any ground disturbance will require consultation with ACOE.



**Figure 15:** located at 45.901122° N and 119.487317° W



## Section VI

Section VI is the final section of the *Columbia River Heritage Trail*. This section begins at the edge of the Irrigon Marina Park and is marked by an access point to show as such. This section continues until the Morrow/Umatilla County border. This section is managed by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) and owned by the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE). This section provides some of the most rugged pieces of trail that can be found in Morrow County. It contains ten trail markers, one interpretive panel, and two access points. Of these, nine of the trail markers are damaged, the interpretive panel has sustained weathering effects, and both of the access points have been the target of graffiti.

Section VI begins at an access point on the eastern most edge of the Irrigon Marina Park area. The interpretive panel has suffered significant damage and graffiti (see figure 16).



Figure 16: located at 45.901608°N and 119.483711°W





This trail marker has suffered from extensive sun exposure and the *CRHT* graphic is unidentifiable (see figure 17). This sign post has also been knocked over leading to a less coherent trail-going experience. Where this sign is located on federally-owned land, a consultation with ACOE is required before this post can be moved or leveled.



**Figure 17:** located at 45.901656° N and 119.472589° W

The only interpretive panel in this section of the *Heritage Trail* is no longer able to be used because of the gouges in its graphic and the general sun damage (see figure 18).



**Figure 18:** located at 45.902805° N and 119.467700° W



The most rugged part of this section has heavily damaged trail marker signs. This specific trail marker has been bent, has bullet holes and the *CRHT* graphic is extremely faded. The post is also no longer level. This trail marker is on federal lands managed by ODFW and will require federal consultation prior to adjusting the sign post (see figure 19).



**Figure 19:** located at 45.904313° N and 118.460856° W

This trail marker has suffered from sun exposure but is generally in good condition. The post is still level and the placard is in good condition only requiring a new graphic (see figure 20).



**Figure 20:** located at 45.903839° N and 119.459447° W



This trail marker sign will need to have the whole sign replaced. The sign has some denting that appear to be from bullets. Both the ODFW and CRHT metal placards will need to be replaced. Coordination with ODFW is recommended (see figure 21).



**Figure 21:** located at 45.905677° N and 119.454373° W



The next trail marker sign in this section will need the graphic replaced (see fig. 22). The post is in good condition which will make maintenance on this sign much easier. Coordination with ODFW is recommended.



**Figure 22:** located at 45.906539° N and 119.450618° W

Very similar to the previous trail marker this post is in good condition but the sun has caused a substantial amount of fading to the sign graphics (see figure 23). This sign will need the graphic replaced to restore continuity and ease of navigation to this section. Coordination with ODFWA is recommended.



**Figure 23:** located at 45.907860° N and 119.447151° W



This trail marker sign will need the *CRHT* graphic to be replaced because of fading that has taken place (see figure 24). Replacement of the graphic and coordination with ODFW is also recommended.



**Figure 24:** located at 45.909203° N and 119.443786° W

Third to the last trail marker for the *CRHT* presents a similar case as the majority. The trail graphic has faded and will need to be replaced. This sign seems to be missing an ODFW sign below the main *Heritage Trail* sign. There appear to be screw holes from where a sign used to be (see figure 25). Coordination with ODFW is recommended.



**Figure 25:** located at 45.910545° N and 119.440345° W



This trail marker sign post has been knocked to the ground and the *Heritage Trail* appears to be missing. There are screw holes where the metal marker sign used to be (see figure 26). The other sign on the post looks like it belongs to ODFW and is very faded. This post cannot be moved until consultation with ACOE and ODFW. Environmental and cultural consultation is likely.



**Figure 26:** located at 45.911542° N and 119.437586



The last trail marker is almost completely gone, however, the post is standing and in good condition. There is a small part of the metal placard at the top of the post. This sign is near the east access point and is more susceptible to people seeking to vandalize the trail. This post will need a new sign and sticker for navigation purposes (see figure 27). Consultation with ODFW is recommended.



**Figure 27:** located at 45.913100° N and 119.432253° W

On the Morrow/Umatilla County border there is an access point to the Heritage Trail. This sign has some graffiti and small BB holes. There is just enough damage here to create a small amount of potential confusion (see figure 28). Consultation with ACOE and ODFW is recommended.



Figure 28: located at 45.913023° N and 119.431535° W



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## SUMMARY

As with any development, maintenance is expected. The Columbia River Heritage Trail has provided some recreational opportunities in the northern part of Morrow County. Updating trail signs that have been vandalized, destroyed or otherwise damaged is not only beneficial to recreationalists but to hunters as well. Being able to interpret the signs that are found while navigating this trail is vital to the experience and spirit of both residents and visitors. Navigation of certain sections can already be challenging.

Displaced or damaged trail markers is a problem that can be fairly easy to remedy. The costs for replacing the trail marker signs can be kept to a minimum by just replacing the stickers on the metal placards. The majority of signs on the trail require little to no other maintenance at this time other than replacing the stickers. Labor costs would be minimal for replacing the stickers. For the few sign posts that have been knocked down, consultation with ACOE and ODFW is required. Given the complexity of federal lands consultation, it could take a while to repair those sign posts. However, in the meantime the rest of the markers should be updated.

Land managers have responsibility to maintain signs and placards and stickers for their respective organization. However, Morrow County can assist by sharing this report and the inventory of stickers and metal placards.

Northern Morrow County has a larger population and the Heritage Trail is an asset that can serve a large group of both residents and visitors. Sections of the Heritage Trail could be utilized for transportation, in addition to recreation. Updating the trail signs and interpretive panels is a relatively easy project that will provide immediate and low-cost enhancements to the Heritage Trail.

Engaging students and community members to help with the signs and interpretive panels is an opportunity to generate interest in the *Heritage Trail*.

**APPENDIX A**

This appendix consists of a series of county base maps. These base maps were designed to support the CRHT and were developed using multiple GIS datasets available to Morrow County at the time of this publication.



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## **APPENDIX B**

This appendix provides a list of agency contacts.

Agency	Address	Phone
Morrow County Planning Department	215 NE Main Ave, Irrigon, OR 97844	(541) 922-4624
Morrow County Parks		
U.S. Fish and Wildlife	64 Maple Street, Burbank, Washington 99323	(509) 546-8300
U.S. Forest Service (Heppner District)	P.O. Box 7, Heppner, OR 97836	(541) 676-9187
District Extension Forester	210 Snell Hall, Corvallis, OR 97331	(541) 602-4689
Oregon Department of Forestry	3501 NE 3 <sup>rd</sup> St, Prineville, OR 97754	(541) 447-5658
Natural Resources Conservation Service	430 Linden Way, Heppner, OR 97836	(541) 676-5021
The Nature Conservancy	620 W 18 <sup>th</sup> St, The Dalles, OR 97058	(541) 298-1802
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife	73471 Mytinger Ln, Pendleton, OR 97801	(541) 301-7972
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers		
The Port of Morrow	2 E Marine Drive, Boardman, OR 97818	(541) 481-7678

City	Address	Phone
City of Boardman	200 City Center Circle, Boardman, OR 97818	(541) 481-9252
City of Irrigon	500 NE Main Ave, Irrigon, OR 97844	(541) 922-3047



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## APPENDIX C

The following information was collected during a 2020 trail marker census conducted by Planning and Parks staff. The entire CRHT was mapped and trail markers were geolocated and recorded in a GIS database.

Temp =previous map boundaries /= within new map boundaries

The table below is a summary of trail sign data collected during the trail census.

Trail Segment	Trail Markers	Interpretive Panels	Access Point
Sec. 2	4/3	2/1	1/1
Sec. 3	2/3	0/1	0/0
Sec. 4	77	2/2	1/1
Sec. 5	0/6	0/5	0/1
Sec. 6	16/10	5/1	3/2
<b>Total:</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>

The table below is a summary of trail signs that need to be repaired or replaced.

Trail Segment	Trail Markers	Interpretive Panels	Access Point
Section 2	2/2	2/1	1/0
Section. 3	1/3	0/0	0/0
Section. 4	0/0	2/1	1/1
Section. 5	0/5	0/3	0/0
Section. 6	15/9	4/1	2/2
<b>Total:</b>	<b>18/19</b>	<b>8/6</b>	<b>4/3</b>