

Wallowa Valley Cultural and Heritage Resources Report

Wallowa Valley has a rich history of people connecting to the incredible landscape. Numerous cultural and heritage resources reflect the farming and ranching, recreation, arts engagement, and business development that began before western migration and continues through today.

Together the Elgin, Wallowa, Lostine, Enterprise and Joseph, along with county wide resources offer excellent opportunity to engage in heritage, arts and humanities. They enhance the economy and livability for the community and provide authentic experience for tourists.

Method

Heritage resources were measured based on criteria of heritage excellence establish in the All-Star Heritage Community Program of Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD). These criteria are described later in the report.

Historic properties were assessed based on the historic survey guidelines of the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). The guidelines use the criteria of the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) to evaluate the eligibility of a building to be listed on the National Register based on age and integrity. A building 45 years or older it is included as eligible for the age criteria. Integrity is a measure of the amount of historic character or appearance the building retains. In the case of Elgin, Enterprise, Wallowa and Joseph, the survey area was the commercial downtown. All of the buildings in Lostine were include in the survey.

Other cultural resources considered were libraries, art centers, art galleries, theaters, community centers, Century Farms and Ranches, Granges and other cultural organizations, historic tours, farmers markets/stands.

Information was collected by interview, in person survey and online research. There may be more resources yet undiscovered for this study.

Results

Historic Properties

28 historic properties in Wallowa County are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Several Ranger and Guard stations throughout the county are listed as is the Nez Perce Traditional Site, Wallowa Lake (Chief Joseph Cemetery) which is a National Historic Landmark.

Elgin - 1

City Hall and Opera House

Wallowa – 2

Wallowa Ranger Station Complex, listed as a historic district

Hunter-Morelock House

Lostine – 1

Lostine Pharmacy (Lostine Tavern)

Enterprise – 10

Enterprise Public Library
Wallowa County Chieftain Building
Enterprise IOOF Hall
William P Warnock House
Enterprise Mercantile & Milling Company
OK Theatre
Gotter Hotel
Wallowa County Courthouse
Burnaugh Building

Joseph – 2

Dr. JW Barnard Building
First Bank of Joseph

Survey Results

	Number surveyed	Eligible/ Significant	Eligible/ Contributing	Not Eligible/ Non- contributing	Not Eligible/ Out of Period
Elgin	31	1	21	6	3
Wallowa	61	3	33	13	12
Lostine	64	4	25	29	6
Enterprise	108	10	57	15	26
Joseph	42	2	15	16	9

Enterprise has a Multiple Property Document in place which makes it easier to list certain properties on the National Register.

Historic Sites Register

Enterprise has a register of locally designated historic sites. All of the communities have historic property information on the Oregon Historic Sites Database.

Preservation Program

Enterprise is the only community with an active preservation program. The City has a historic commission in place to move forward preservation work in the community. The City developed the Multiple Property Document for listing properties on the National Register and 7 properties have been listed under this document. The City and commission also promote preservation through public education projects such as interpretive panels, awards and tours.

Grant Funded Projects

Elgin received foundation grant funding for the restoration of the historic Opera House. Enterprise has taken advantage of Certified Local Government, Preserving Oregon and Diamonds in the Rough grants. The Enterprise Cemetery received a Historic Cemetery grant. A private property owner in Lostine received a Diamonds in the

Rough Grant. Wallowa County Museum in Joseph received Preserving Oregon grant funding and other foundation funding in the past. Wallowa and Union Counties have active Cultural Coalitions that award grants in arts, heritage and humanities with funding from the Oregon Cultural Trust.

History Museum

The Elgin Area Historical Society Museum is in Elgin. Wallowa houses the Wallowa Band Nez Perce Trail Interpretive Center and the Wallowa History Center. The Wallowa County Museum and the Maxville Interpretive Center can be found in Joseph.

Public Education

Each community has a historic walking tour brochure and there are two county wide heritage tour brochures in Wallowa County. Other public education activities include interpretive panels in Elgin, Enterprise and Joseph. Sunrise Iron is an antique tractor exhibit on a working farm outside of Enterprise. Other public education efforts may exist and were not collected in this assessment.

Website

There are no websites for the valley that consolidate heritage information and resources. Several individual organizations have websites, and the tourism agencies have websites.

Oregon Main Street

Enterprise is an Oregon Main Street community at the Exploring Downtown level, they have an active board working toward downtown economic revitalization.

Tourism/Chamber

Elgin, Enterprise and Joseph have Chambers of Commerce that promote tourism opportunities. The Wallowa County Chamber of Commerce is based in Enterprise. Oregon Travel Experience has one Heritage Tree designation in Wallowa County. The Indian Village Grove near the Nez Perce National Historic Trail is a grove of ponderosa pines with oval scars that provide evidence of the traditional spring camp of the Nez Perce. Travel Oregon Experience also has two historical markers in the Wallowa Valley, both near Wallowa Lake. One is about the Nez Perce and the other is about the lake itself.

Public or Historic Records and Photo Archives

Elgin has local historical records and photographs housed at the Elgin Area Historical Society Museum. Wallowa History Center in Wallowa keeps local history records and has some family photographs. The County Court House in Enterprise houses extensive public records. The Wallowa County Museum and the Joseph Center for Arts and Culture in Joseph both maintain local history records and photo archives.

Oral Histories

Elgin Area Historical Society Museum and the Wallowa History Center have some oral histories. Wallowa County Museum in Joseph has a large collection of oral histories. The Joseph Center for Arts and Culture is actively collecting oral histories.

Heritage Events

The largest ongoing event in the valley is the Wallowa County Fair. Other events include the Chief Joseph Days Rodeo and the Wallowa School Reunion.

Historic Cemetery Designation

Due the long time funeral service provider in the valley the historic cemeteries are well documented and have been listed with the Oregon Commission on Historic Cemeteries. While other cemeteries are throughout both Union and Wallowa Counties, several are associated with the focus communities of this report. Elgin, Wallowa and Enterprise each have five and Lostine and Joseph each have two.

Cemetery & Genealogical Record

Again due to the long time funeral service provider in the valley, the cemetery records are strong. They have been provided to the Oregon Commission on Historic Cemeteries. Other genealogical research can be completed at the Elgin Area Historical Society Museum, Wallowa History Center, and Wallowa County Museum. The LDS Church in Enterprise also has a family history center.

Historic Theater

Elgin and Enterprise both have historic theaters. Wallowa has a historic theater building, which has been significantly altered on the interior, but could be brought back to use.

Long-term Local Business

There are several long-term businesses in the valley, and many more may be undocumented here. The oldest continually operated business in the valley is the M. Crow and Company Store in Lostine, open over 100 years. The Enterprise Chieftain has been published since 1884. Wallowa Title Company and Bollman Funeral Home have been in existence around fifty years. The lumber company and hardware store in Joseph have been around over fifty years.

Theater Companies

Elgin has one company and a valley-wide program is based in Lostine.

Library

Wallowa County library based in Enterprise serves the entire county. Elgin, Wallowa, Enterprise and Joseph have city libraries.

Community Center

Elgin and Enterprise have community centers.

Arts Center

Wallowa Valley Arts Center and the Josephy Center for Arts and Culture are both in Joseph.

Other Cultural Organizations

Enterprise is the home to Fishtrap, Wallowa County Music Alliance and the Bowlby Arts Group. Joseph has the Wallowa County Photo Club. The Wallowa Mountain quilters Guild is based in Joseph.

Other Museum/Interpretive

Wallowology is an interpretive center for natural history, geology and more. It includes tours and other activities.

Granges

Each community has a grange facility and organization.

Elgin – Rockwall #679

Wallowa - Wallowa Grange #603

Lostine – South Fork #605

Enterprise – North End #820

Joseph - Hurricane Creek #608, Liberty #613

Century Farms and Ranches

Wallowa County has 18 Century Farms designated with the state program.

Recommendations

Wallowa Valley has many heritage and cultural resources. Some cases of cooperation and collaboration among these efforts is evidenced. Further development of these resources and deeper cooperation would benefit the organizations, community and tourism.

Certified Local Government (CLG) program

This Federal program managed through the State Historic Preservation Office offers grant funding and technical assistance for the preservation and promotion of historic properties. Enterprise is already a CLG and has reaped the benefits of participation. The cities of Elgin and Joseph should consider the program. Wallowa County becoming a CLG would benefit the smaller communities that clearly have historic resources, but may not have the capacity to manage the program.

National Register of Historic Places Nominations

Several properties in the communities should be considered for additional research. Wallowa and Enterprise have likely historic districts. With some restoration of buildings Elgin and Joseph could also have districts.

Building Preservation and Restoration

Several buildings in all of the communities have been altered over time, diminishing their historic character. The Diamonds in the Rough grant program would be helpful to restore their character and make them eligible for the National Register. Buildings that are listed on the National Register, but need repair, are eligible for Preserving Oregon and CLG grants. Preserving Oregon can fund the construction work. The CLG grant can fund

both plans and construction. Listed buildings are also eligible for state and federal incentive programs for preservation work.

Museums & Archives

Support local museums and archives by taking advantage of technical assistance and grants. Support the organization and care of these valuable collections. Ensure that the organizations housing have collections policies and training in collections care. Encourage and support them in developing a disaster preparedness plan. Use the Oregon Heritage MentorCorps program to getting support and training for the organizations individually or jointly. Make sure they are aware of the Oregon Museum and Oregon Heritage grants.

Historic Cemeteries

Make the cemetery caretakers aware of the technical assistance materials and grant program of the Oregon Commission on Historic Cemeteries.

Website

Collaborate on a valley-wide heritage website that offers information on the general history of the area, links to organizations with websites and provide a page for those who don't have one. Oregon Heritage and Travel Oregon grants may be able to fund this project.

Oregon Main Street

All communities should join the Oregon Main Street program at the Affinity Level to learn about resources available for downtown economic development. Consider a joint valley-wide Main Street program to engage all the communities with shared resources.

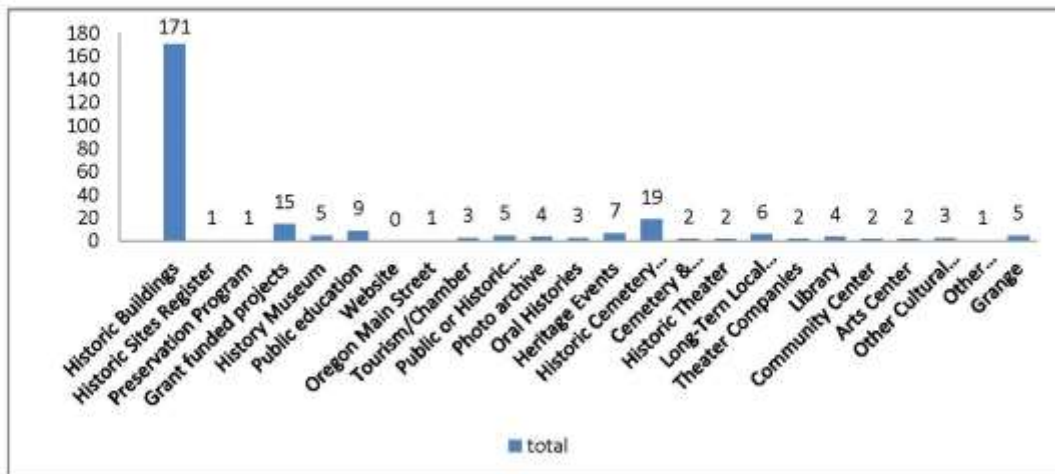
Public Education

Continue with joint public education programs, tours, online resources, interpretive panels, heritage events and make people are aware of them. Oregon Heritage grants can support these efforts.

Wallowa Valley Heritage and Cultural Resources

Column1	total	Elgin	Wallowa	Lostine	Enterprise	Joesph
Historic Buildings	171	22	36	29	67	17
Historic Sites Register	1	0	0	0	1	0
Preservation Program	1	0	0	0	1	0
Grant funded projects	15	3	0	1	6	5
History Museum	5	1	2	0	0	2
Public education	9	2	1	1	3	2
Website	0	0	0	0	0	0
Oregon Main Street	1	0	0	0	1	0
Tourism/Chamber	3	1	0	0	1	1
Public or Historic Records Archive	5	1	1	0	1	2
Photo archive	4	1	1	0	0	2
Oral Histories	3	0	1	0	0	2
Heritage Events	7	1	2	1	1	2
Historic Cemetery Designation	19	5	5	2	5	2
Cemetery & Genealogical Record	2	0	1	0	0	1
Historic Theater	2	1	0	0	1	0
Long-Term Local Businesses	6	0	0	1	3	2
Theater Companies	2	1	0	1	0	0
Library	4	1	1	0	1	1
Community Center	2	1	0	0	1	0
Arts Center	2	0	0	0	0	2
Other Cultural Organizations	3	0	0	0	2	1
Other Museum/Interpretive Center	1	0	0	0	0	1
Grange	5	1	1	1	1	1

County Wide	
Public Education	2
Oregon Century Farms & Ranches	18
National Register Properties	27
Tourism/Chamber	3



Definitions

Arts Center – An organization that provides space to teach, practice and display art.

Cemetery and Genealogical Records - The community has implemented a program to verify and make available cemetery and genealogical records to the public in written or electronic form for use in historic and genealogy research.

Community Center – A building whose purpose is for a community gathering place for events and activities.

Grange – A building and/or organization associated with the nationwide Grange organization.

Grant Funded Projects - The community has obtained and successfully completed at least five grants within the past decade for heritage-related projects.

Heritage Events - The community has conducted an event or commemorative activity on an annual basis for at least 25 years to recognize an aspect of the community's cultural heritage. Oregon Heritage Tradition designation by the Oregon Heritage Commission would automatically meet this requirement.

Historic Cemetery Designation - The community has at least one historic cemetery that has been officially designated as such by the Oregon Commission on Historic Cemeteries, and there are ongoing efforts to maintain and protect it.

History Museum - The community has a history museum that operates during regularly scheduled hours. In order for a museum to qualify under this category it must have been in operation for at least two years, have an on-site attendant, and be open at least 120 hours per year. A “heritage tourism facility” may substitute for a museum under this category if it has substantial heritage-related offerings and meets the requirements described above.

Historic Preservation Program – The city or county has adopted a historic preservation ordinance and has a local landmarks commission that meets regularly. Achieving the Certified Local Government (CLG) status through the SHPO fulfills this requirement.

Historic Properties - Properties that are eligible to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Eligible/contributing – meaning they retain much of their historic appearance and contribute as a whole to the historic character of downtown

Eligible/significant - meaning they are over 45 years of age and are noteworthy due to their architectural character and/or their significance to the local history

Historic Sites Register - The city or county has an active process for surveying and documenting historic properties and listing significant historic properties in either a local historic sites register or the National Register of Historic Places. The State Historic Sites Database of SHPO has this information as collected by SHPO.

Historic Theater – A theater building, 50 years or older, that still operates as a theater for film or live performance.

Library – An organization that houses and loans books and other materials, provides access to information and public engagement about the literary arts.

Long-term Local Businesses - The city has three or more locally owned, active businesses that have been in operation for 50 years or more, and it has a program for recognizing that achievement.

National Register Properties – Properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Oral Histories - An organization is functioning in the community that has implemented an oral history program that records, transcribes into written form and make accessible to the public interviews with long-time residents or individuals involved in events or activities of a historic nature.

Oregon Century Farms and Ranches- Oregon farms and ranches, continuously operated as farms and ranches and owned by the same family for 100 years or more.

Oregon Main Street - The community has an active Main Street program that has been accepted by Oregon Main Street (OMS) into either of the top two tiers of participation: Transforming Downtown or Performing Main Street.

Other Cultural Organizations – An Organization that is cultural in nature, but does not meet the definitions of other categories.

Other Museum/Interpretive Center – A museum or interpretive center of a discipline other than art, history, or heritage.

Photo Archive - An organization in the community has a program to gather, identify, preserve, and make accessible to the public photographs related to the community's past.

Public Education - Within the past decade, the community has produced or conducted a substantial public education offering, including interpretive signage, walking tour, publication, or other media presentation that promotes the community's history.

Public or Historic Records Archive - The community has a policy in place for handling and preserving archival, historic, government, and other public records that complies with professional standards.

Theater Companies – Organizations that produce plays for the public.

Tourism/Chamber - The community has historic markers, public interpretive panels, walking/biking/driving heritage related tours, heritage/history brochures, heritage trees designated by the Oregon Travel Experience, programs with Travel Oregon and the community has promoted those features through public education and tourism promotion efforts.

Website - The community maintains an up-to-date web site that provides meaningful content about the community's history, including a listing of the heritage activities and programs available in the community (such as the items on this list of Designation Criteria).