

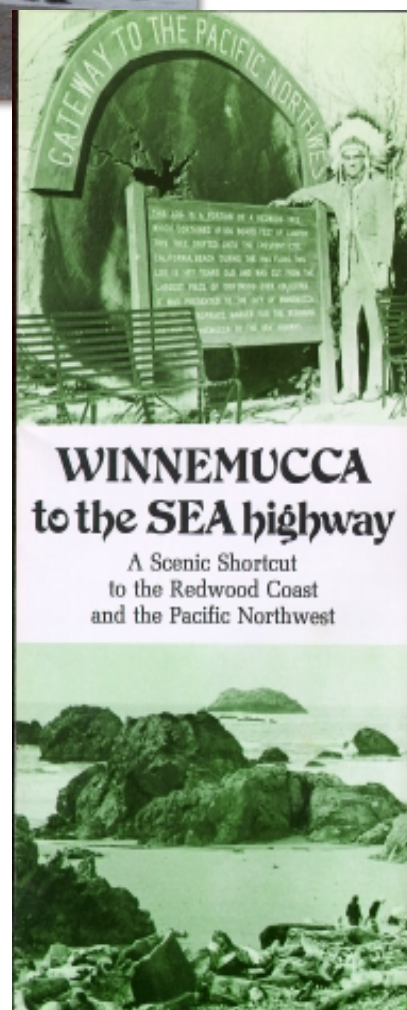


The Historic Winnemucca to the Sea Highway *“Gateway to the Pacific Northwest”*

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The Winnemucca to the Sea highway was developed to establish a continuous, improved all-weather highway from US-40 (I-80) at Winnemucca, Nevada through Medford, Oregon and on to the Pacific coast at Crescent City, California. In the mid 1950's there was no direct route west from Northern Nevada across Southern Oregon and into California's Redwood Empire. Community leaders from points along this proposed link formed the Winnemucca to the Sea Highway Association. The association worked with state and local governments to fund the design, construction and upgrade of the paved roadway for this east to west link across three states. The association had envisioned one highway number 140 applied to the complete route, as the parent major US highway was coast-to-coast US-40, the Victory Highway. Nevada and Oregon used state route 140 for their respective sections of the Winnemucca to the Sea Highway. But the renumbering or cosigning of federal highways was an obstacle that the Winnemucca to the Sea Association never did overcome, thus the hope of a continuous 140 designation for this link was never realized. Currently the traveler will follow seven different highway numbers from Winnemucca to Crescent City, they are US-95, state route-140, US-395, state route-62, Interstate-5, US-199 and US-101.

Winnemucca, named after a local Paiute chief, has always been a crossroads town. It began as a bridge over the Humboldt River for emigrants taking the Applegate-Lassen trail into northern California and Oregon. This community was a major point on the transcontinental railroad and is a stop over on the ocean-to-ocean highway US-40 (I-80). Today



Association brochure circa 1960's

View west of Nevada SR-140
at US 95 Jct



Antelope along SR-140



No service warning sign
west of Denio Junction



Winnemucca is a community of 11,000 people at the base of sagebrush covered 6,740-foot Winnemucca Mountain. The Winnemucca to the Sea highway link starts west from this point. Winnemucca to Lakeview

Highway US-95 leaves north from Winnemucca, connecting Northern Nevada to Southeast Oregon, and continues into Idaho. Some 36 miles north on US-95 Nevada state route 140 (ex8A) branches off and runs northwest to the small border community of Denio. West across the high desert region to Lakeview, Oregon there were only dirt roads that connected scattered ranches and another small community of Adel, Oregon. In 1962 the paving of the 117-mile Lakeview to Denio Junction section was completed. The Winnemucca to the Sea highway was dedicated in September 1962 at Doherty Slide, east of Lakeview, Oregon and 20 miles from the Nevada Stateline, by association members and the Governor of Nevada. It was dubbed "the road to nowhere" as it passed through the remote sparsely populated region of Southern Oregon and Northern Nevada. Current road signs on this section warn that there is no gas for 81 miles.



Saghen Summit, the highest point on the Winnemucca to the Sea Route, has a 190 degree panorama





Doherty Slide is a fault escarpment with over a 1000 foot drop on a 8% grade. The slide is named for the method used to get wooden wagons down this area. The wheels were locked with a pole the teams unhitched and the wagon just slid down the hillside!

At Adel 140 enters the Fremont National Forest and is the gateway to the Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge

Just north of Lakeview is one of Oregon's two Geysers

Along the Winnemucca to the Sea highway there are 5 road cams that give a livetime view of road conditions. They can be viewed at www.tripcheck.com/RoadCams

Midway between Lakeview and Klamath Falls there is a mix of small Sage and scrub Juniper.



The Oregon section of this highway was given the Oregon 140 designation which the association had hoped to apply to the complete Winnemucca to the Sea highway link. The Nevada section was originally Nevada 8A and has been redesignated as Nevada 140. Nevada highway officials also cosigned US-95 with 140 highway markers from downtown Winnemucca to the 140 turn off. These cosigns have since been removed.

This 207-mile section passes through a high desert sea of sagebrush, scrub conifers, and the Sheldon Antelope Wildlife Refuge. Leaving Winnemucca the great open vistas of Northern Nevada stretch out before you. Before reaching state route 140 Paradise Valley, (home to some of the best potatoes grown,) is at the base of the snow-capped Santa Rosa Range. Located southwest of the longest straight tangent of the route is the northern border of the Black Rock Desert. The desert consists of a large very flat dry lake bed (playa). The land speed record was set by a jet powered vehicle breaking the sound barrier here in 1997. The small border town of Denio/Denio Junction is the last gas stop before reaching Adel, 81 miles ahead.

The highest point on the Winnemucca to the Sea Highway is 6,349-foot Sagehen Hills summit just short of the Oregon stateline. The highway now leaves the Great Basin Region and enters the Volcanic Oregon Outback. This area is noted as one of the premier hang-gliding locations on the West Coast. Warner Canyon Ski Area with its triple chair lift is the only non-profit, volunteer ski area in Oregon and the only ski area along the Winnemucca to the Sea Highway. The first of five road-cams viewable on the Internet is located here. A short section on US-395/140, (Oregon's Outback

The Mitchell Monument is 10 miles off 140. On May 5, 1945 six people on a picnic were killed here by a Japanese balloon bomb, five were children.

Just west of Dairy 140 passes over the OC&E Trail on a classic 1930 style bridge.

The OC&E Rails to Trails State Park crosses SR-140 just east of Klamath Falls

Klamath Falls is a mainline and was a logging railroad town. It is the only town with Amtrak service along the Winnemucca to the Sea Highway.



National Scenic Byway) leads to Lakeview, Oregon. Lakeview, located along the base of the Warner Mountains, has a population of 2,648, and is known as the “Tallest Town in Oregon” with an elevation of 4,780-feet.

Lakeview to Klamath Falls

At Lakeview Oregon state route 140 leaves rolling sagebrush behind and enters the Fremont National Forest. This 96-mile section connects with Klamath Falls passing by the Gearhart Mountain Wilderness Area. This is the location of

the only World War II fatalities that occurred in the 48 contiguous states. The deaths were caused by a Japanese balloon bomb launched into the jet stream intending to start fires in the forests of Northwest America. Before reaching Klamath Falls route 140 parallels the OC&E Woods Line State Trail. The 100-mile rail-to-trail conversion was built on a logging railroad railbed that serviced the logging industry from Klamath Falls east to the long closed lumber mills at Bly.

Klamath Falls, population of 17,000, is located at the southern shores of Upper Klamath Lake which is the largest lake in Oregon. Klamath Falls is the transition zone between the Great Basin sage and juniper of eastern Oregon to the large conifer forests and high rainfall vegetation of the Cascades.

Klamath Falls to Medford

West from Klamath Falls the original route to Medford used state route 66 to Interstate 5/US-99. Route 66 goes through the Siskiyou Mountains and connects with I-5 at Ashland, Oregon south of Medford. Later the Lake of the Woods highway, state route 140, was opened in the mid sixties going north from Klamath Falls along the Upper Klamath Lake. This section along Upper Klamath Lake is also part of the Volcanic Legacy Scenic





Upper Klamath Lake is not only a good recreation source but part of the basin's wildlife refuges, home to the largest concentration of bald eagles and blue-green algae.

Before turning west to Medford the highway from Klamath Falls runs along the Upper Klamath Lake and is designated part of the Volcanic Legacy Scenic Byway.

Mt McLaughlin viewed from Lake of the Woods is the highest peak along this route.

Lake of the Woods Resort General Store



Byway which leads to Crater Lake National Park. Going west the highway passes Lake of the Woods next to Mt McLaughlin a 9,495-foot volcanic cinder cone. This scenic drive goes through the Rogue River National Forest and connects with state highway 62 just north of Medford at White City. The 140-highway designation will end here, the next sections of the Winnemucca to the Sea will be Federal highways.

Medford, Oregon is the largest city on the Winnemucca to the Sea highway with a population of 63,000. Located in the Rogue River Valley Medford is the business and professional center of southern Oregon and is bisected by Interstate Highway 5. Interstate 5 follows the route of US-99, the original two-lane north-south highway. Medford is known for its pears and is home to Harry and David the nation's leading mail-order fruit business. The store is located just south on I-5 at the next exit (27) and is a must stop for fruit and "Moose Munch." The area's visitor center is also located in the same building.





In Eagle Point, north of Medford, is the covered bridge at Antelope Creek, one of four in the Medford area

State Route 140 ends at highway 62 in White City just outside of Medford

Semaphore style railroad signals are still in use north of Medford. This is one of the last areas in the US where they are active. These signals can be seen from I-5 just north of Medford

In Grants Pass highways 99 and 199 cross the Rogue River on this classic style concrete bridge, one of many along the route.



Medford to Grants Pass

The short 30-mile section over four-lane Interstate 5 between Medford and Grants Pass is the only freeway section of a mostly two-lane adventure. For a slower pace take 99 to Grants Pass as it winds over old bridges along the Rogue River and passes by homes and small communities. Grants Pass is well known for recreation on the Wild and Scenic Rogue River. Grants Pass is also the gateway to the Oregon Caves National Monument and the Redwood Highway US-199.



Oregon Caves National Monument is located 18 miles from Cave Junction just before the California stateline

The Winnemucca to the Sea highway now US 199 winds through the Illinois Valley before entering the Smith River Canyon and the Siskiyou

The Collier Tunnel on US 199 was an important upgrade supported by the Winnemucca to the Sea Association

The Smith River runs along US 199 as the roadway winds down in the narrow canyon before reaching the coastal Redwoods



Deep in the Smith River Canyon is Patrick Creek Lodge built in the 1920s along the new highway after it was built by the US Corp of Engineers replacing the Gasquet Toll Road

Grants Pass to Crescent City

This last link in the Winnemucca to the Sea highway was upgraded in 1963 with the opening of the Collier Tunnel built under the old road established by the US Corp Engineers in 1926 over 2100-foot Hazel View summit. It is 86 miles from Grants Pass to the connection with California's Coast Highway US 101 and passes along the Middle Fork of the Smith River and into the Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Park. The Smith River is the only major river on the West Coast that is not dammed. After passing historic Patrick Creek Lodge a botanical trail leads to a view of very rare California insect-digesting Pitcher Plants.

Crescent City has a population of 4,400. In 1964 much of the waterfront and downtown were destroyed by a tsunami caused by the Alaskan earthquake. Today Crescent City is where most of the world's Easter lilies are grown. The historic Battery Point Lighthouse built in 1856 is located at Crescent City's harbor and is the symbolic end to the Winnemucca to the Sea highway. In 494 miles the





Winnemucca to the Sea Highway takes the traveler from rolling desert sagebrush to rolling ocean surf.

Today the popularity of the Winnemucca to the Sea Highway has faded somewhat, it is not shown on any maps and few brochures still can be found. Nevada removed the route 140 signs from US 95 in the mid-seventies cutting the link from its parent road old US 40, which today is now Interstate 80. In Winnemucca on the corner of Winnemucca Blvd (Business 80) and Melarkey (US 95) there is a cross section of a large Redwood tree. The 13 feet diameter driftwood log washed ashore during the 1964 flood in Crescent City and was dedicated as a highway marker in March 1965. The Winnemucca to the Sea Highway is still the "Gateway to the Pacific Northwest" as the banner placed on this Redwood log proclaims.

Travelers can begin the trip with a Basque Picon Punch at the historic Winnemucca Hotel and finish with a locally caught crab cocktail at the Chart Room in Crescent City.



Near the end of the Winnemucca to the Sea highway US 199 winds through towering Redwoods

This redwood log and wooden map is the only symbols of the Winnemucca to the Sea Highway that can still be seen. At one time there was a large billboard showing the route along US 101 at the 199 turnoff



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