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For Immediate Release May 18, 2011 News Contact: Sarah LeCompte, (541) 523-1825

## Open the Gate Event celebrates improvements at Trail Center

**BAKER CITY, ORE.** The Trail Tenders invite everyone to a special day at the National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center on Saturday, June 4. Several events on National Trails Day will celebrate recent improvements at the facility in Baker City.

The Trail Tenders have been long-time partners with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in operating the 509-acre Oregon Trail Interpretive Center, known for its outstanding exhibits and programs on history and nature. For over 20 years the volunteer group has contributed talent and labor, raised funds, and taken on special projects to keep this national cultural resource a top heritage tourist attraction for the Pacific Northwest. More than two million tourists have visited the Trail Center.

This year the Trail Tenders completed an ambitious project to add a piece of outdoor art to the main entrance and install new signs. The public's long-standing request for an art piece honoring our pioneer heritage was begun and funded by Trail Tenders, who worked with local artist Terri Axness and local craftsmen at Baker Welding to create a unique iron gate. These projects, and recent improvements provided by the BLM via stimulus funding, have upgraded driveways, hiking trails, and fencing at the site.

The one of a kind metal sculpture gate depicts mountain men and covered wagons on the Oregon Trail. It echoes the full scale wagon train diorama inside the Trail Center.

The "Open the Gate" event on June 4<sup>th</sup> starts with a 5K fun run and trail walk. The gate dedication takes place at 11:30 at the main entrance, and includes live music by the Elks Drum and Bugle Corps. At 12:30 there is a Dutch oven lunch. Live bluegrass music by Denny Langford and Friends, carriage rides by Colton Carriage, plus nature hikes, theater programs, and gold panning will continue throughout the afternoon. Admission is free during National Trails Day.

Trail Tender President Mike Bainter said, "We hope to offer a fun day for everyone to see all the new improvements at the Trail Center. This is a great community resource, and we especially invite members of the community to come and see what we're doing." You can learn more about the Trail Tenders by calling the Interpretive Center at 541-523-1843, or check their website: [www.trailtenders.org](http://www.trailtenders.org)

The National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center, operated by the Bureau of Land Management, is located five miles east of Baker City, Oregon on Highway 86. Take Exit 302 from I-84. The Center is open daily from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Admission for adults is \$8, seniors are \$4.50, children 15 and under are free. Federal passes are accepted. Visit [oregontrail.blm.gov](http://oregontrail.blm.gov) for more information about the Center, or call 541-523-1843 for updates on programs and events. For information on other events and activities in Baker County, Oregon, call 1-800-523-1235.

-BLM-

**About the BLM:** The BLM manages more land – more than 245 million acres - than any other Federal agency. This land, known as the National System of Public Lands, is primarily located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The Bureau, with a budget of about \$1 billion, also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM's multiple-use mission is to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Bureau accomplishes this by managing such activities as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, mineral development, and energy production, and by conserving natural, historical, cultural, and other resources on public lands.

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