

# NEWS Release BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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**For Immediate Release**

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## Lost Homesteads Photography Exhibit at Trail Center

**BAKER CITY, Ore.** – The story of the Fort Rock homestead era will be retold in an exhibit of contemporary photographs at the National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center in Baker City this fall.

“High Desert Dreams: The Lost Homesteads of the Fort Rock Basin” by Corvallis photographer Rich Bergeman will be on view at the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center’s Flagstaff Gallery from Sept. 19 to Nov. 30. A book of photographs based on the exhibit will be available for purchase at the Center.

Bergeman spent several weeks exploring the Fort Rock and Christmas Lake valleys while an artist in residence at Playa on Summer Lake in 2012. With the help of some long-time residents and old maps, he was able to create a photographic journey back in time through his images of abandoned homesteads, disappeared town sites, geologic features and remnants of that mostly-forgotten chapter in Oregon history.

The exhibit features more than 30 black-and-white photographs, maps and accompanying text that tell the story of the early 20th century land rush that brought hundreds of pioneers to the Fort Rock and Christmas Lake valleys between 1908 and 1915. They arrived with hopes of carving out a livelihood on their own piece of the western frontier, but their dreams were done in by the harsh realities of the High Desert climate. By the 1930s the towns had emptied, school houses boarded up, and abandoned cabins littered the landscape.

Over the decades since then, nearly all evidence of that era has gradually disappeared. But not all—Bergeman’s evocative photographs capture the often unappreciated beauty of the area, as well as the melancholy left behind by broken dreams.

A native of Ohio and an Oregonian since 1975, Bergeman has been a journalist and educator during his career and a fine art photographer for the past 30 years. His main interest is in researching and photographing the vanishing traces of Oregon’s bygone days on both sides of the Cascades.

The Trail Center is located five miles east of Baker City, Oregon on Highway 86. Take Exit 302 from I-84. The Center is currently open 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily. Admission for adults is \$8.00; for seniors it’s \$4.50; children 15 and under are admitted for free. Federal passes are accepted. Call (541) 523-1843 for updates on programs and events. For more information about the Trail Center visit [oregontrail.blm.gov](http://oregontrail.blm.gov).

The BLM manages more than 245 million acres of public land, the most of any Federal agency. This land, known as the National System of Public Lands, is primarily located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The BLM also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM’s mission is to manage and conserve the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations under our mandate of multiple-use and sustained yield. In fiscal Year, 2013, the BLM generated \$4.7 billion in receipts from public lands.

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