



U.S. Department of Interior  
Bureau of Land Management

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# Surprise Valley Barrel Springs

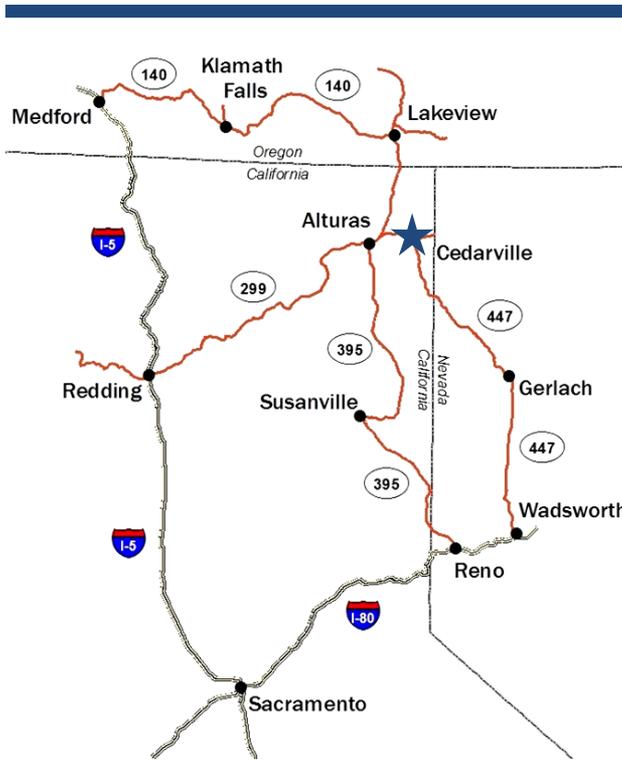
Back Country Byway

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A Self-Guided Tour

*Welcome to the road less traveled! Few people get to experience the beautiful mountains and valley you see on the front cover. This brochure and map will tell you how to find and explore Surprise Valley- how it got its name, the history of the emigrants who ventured west in 1849, and the geological wonders that have shaped this landscape.*



**A map showing the location of Cedarville and major highways in the area**

**Getting There:** From U.S. Hwy. 395 in California, five miles north of Alturas, Modoc County, take California Hwy. 299 east to Cedarville, California. From Interstate 80 at Wadsworth in Nevada, 30 miles east of Reno, take Nevada Hwy. 447 north through Gerlach, 141 miles to Cedarville, California.

**SURPRISE VALLEY-BARREL SPRINGS  
BACK COUNTRY BYWAY  
A SELF-GUIDED TOUR**

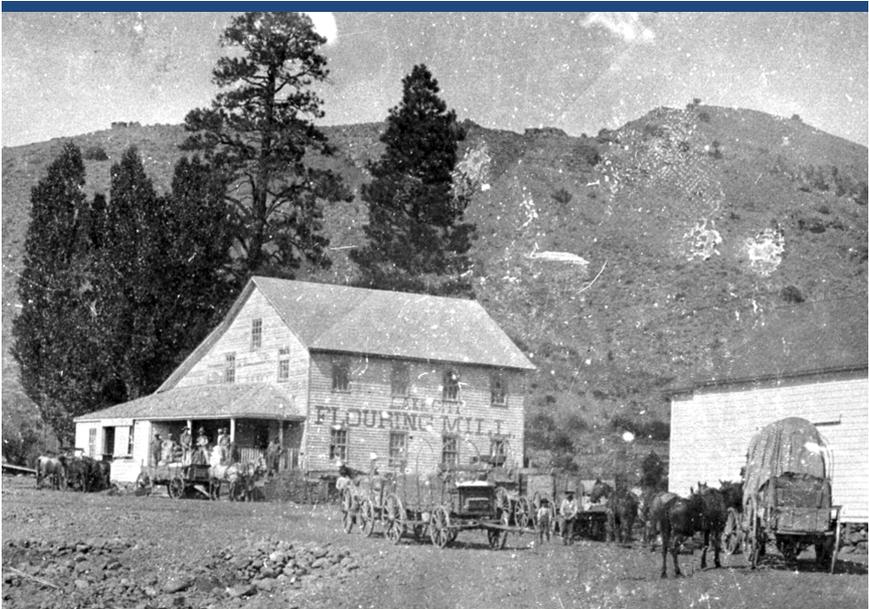


*Pronghorn antelope with Mount Bidwell in the background*

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Lake City Flouring Mill circa 1900

## THE SECRET VALLEY

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*The Warner Mountains soar up from the valley floor like a scene from an Ansel Adams photograph. In the valley, coveys of quail trickle across the quiet streets in little towns. At twilight, herds of mule deer join cattle and sheep in the green fields. There are no stoplights, no traffic, and no sirens. This is where the paved road ends. This place, Surprise Valley, is so removed, so distinct from the rest of California, that you, like others, may come to find that it is the Golden State's best kept secret.*

## QUIET LITTLE TOWNS AT THE EDGE OF THE WILD WEST

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The Byway route through Surprise Valley will take you through a varied landscape of quiet, small communities nestled at the base of a mountain range and the high desert filled with sagebrush and juniper trees. As you travel through this landscape, you are a time traveler in the wild west with historic buildings and a country that is tough and unyielding.

The Back Country Byway is a great opportunity to experience the “forgotten California” where hustle and bustle are far away and the landscape seems unchanged.



## A SENSE OF PLACE

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There are few places on this earth where it is possible to travel so quickly from one type of ecosystem to another. A short drive from Cedar Pass to Surprise Valley takes you from alpine peaks and pine forests to arid valley floors and sagebrush-covered hills. Once you arrive in Surprise Valley you enter the world of the Great Basin.

This is a dynamic, ever-changing landscape full of challenges. The plants, animals, and people that succeed here have been able to adapt to arid conditions, unpredictable droughts, and long, cold winters. It is also a land full of beauty and wonder.

Since people first arrived in the Great Basin, climate and geology have dictated where and how they have lived.

Yet as the landscape continues to change, what will be the effect on us? Or has technology removed us from these concerns?

At the end of your Byway journey you will have a deeper understanding and can ponder the question yourself.



*The Milky Way over Long Valley*

## A JOURNEY OF MANY STORIES

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The Bureau of Land Management established Back Country Byways, part of the National Scenic Byways network, to provide recreational and educational opportunities for visitors who are passionate about taking the road less traveled and learning about this places' natural and cultural history.

On this journey, you will see evidence of ancient volcanic eruptions, stand on a prehistoric beach where people hunted Ice Age animals, re-live a time when the U.S. Army Cavalry was stationed at Fort Bidwell, and imagine emigrants coming across the rugged landscape in search of a better life.

## THE HISTORY OF A NAME

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**Warner Mountains:** The Warner Mountains, previously known as the Warners Range, was named for Captain W. H. Warner of the U.S. Army Corps of Topographic Engineers, who explored the Sierra Nevada Mountains for better wagon routes. Captain Warner was killed at the eastern base of the mountains in 1849.

**Surprise Valley:** Contrary to local lore (and previous versions of this booklet), Surprise Valley was not named by pioneers traveling the Applegate Trail. Alas, if the emigrants had a name for this valley it was never written in a diary or has been lost to time. The valley was named by Captain Alanson Nightingill in 1860.

After the Battles of Pyramid Lake, Captain Nightingill and the Truckee Rangers were in pursuit of Paiute Indians in the Black Rock Desert region. To their astonishment, they came across the valley which they believe no white person had ever seen before. Nightingill insisted that they name the area after their first impression of the valley, Surprise!

**Fort Bidwell:** This place was originally called *Tusi'yamus* ("Grassy Corner") by the Northern Paiute Indians. The town of Fort Bidwell is named after General John Bidwell. Camp Bidwell was originally located near Chico, California. When this camp was abandoned, the name transferred to the U.S. Army fort at the north end of Surprise Valley.

**Lake City:** This town was formerly known as Tri-Lake City and named for the three lakes in the valley. The Northern Paiute called the upward tilting peak south of town *Hu na'-na-mubi* ("Badger His Nose").

**Cedarville:** The origin of the town's name is unclear. It may have been named after Cedarville, Ohio (the hometown of one of Cedarville's founders) or after a large cedar tree growing in the canyon above the town. The Northern Paiute Indians called this place *Pa-su-bi* ("Water Willow").

**Eagleville:** This community south of Cedarville is named after nearby Eagle Peak. At 9,892 feet above sea level (3,015 meters), Eagle Peak is the highest point in the Warner Mountains.



*Middle Alkali Lake in Surprise Valley*

## **A YOUNG AND DYNAMIC LANDSCAPE**

In geological terms, the rugged landscape of Surprise Valley is relatively young with its formation beginning approximately 20 million years ago in a series of volcanic events associated with basalt (a dark extrusive volcanic rock) and rhyolite (a light extrusive volcanic rock) flows.

After a relatively quiet period of three million years, volcanic activity associated with the Yellowstone Caldera flooded the area with more basalt.

Around this time formation of the Basin and Range increased (and continues even today). From Canada to Mexico and from Wyoming to California, the land surface is being pulled apart east to west by faults deep within the earth. As the earth crust is strained in this way, normal faults develop, and blocks of the crust drop down to form valleys. The result is a vast landscape of alternating north-south trending valleys and ridges.

Fifteen million years ago, rhyolitic lava flows and ash flows covered portions of northwestern Nevada. Basalt flows then covered the ashfall and the extreme pressure and heat “welded” the tuff. Large rivers with forested floodplains drained towards the Pacific Ocean.

These rivers carried nodules of obsidian (volcanic glass) miles downstream, and today these rocks are distributed throughout the Massacre Lake and Duck Flat basins near Surprise Valley.

Animals (such as camels, rhinoceroses, three-toed horses, and mastodons) and plants (such as redwoods and oak trees) flourished between eruptions.

Approximately three million years ago, the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range and the Warner Mountain Range began to uplift. These uplifts cut off the flow of the rivers towards the Pacific and today all the precipitation that falls on this valley never leaves the Great Basin.

The Earth has experienced at least five major ice ages with the most recent one beginning approximately 2.5 million years ago.

Up until about 20,000 years ago, the northern half of North America was covered with ice sheets. These sheets of glacial ice were massive with some almost 2 miles (3 kilometers) thick.

As the Earth's climate warmed, glaciers began to melt, and large lakes filled the valley floors throughout the Great Basin. Pleistocene Lake Surprise filled this valley and Duck Flat basin to the south. The lake was 577 feet (176 meters) deep when it reached its last high stand about 15,000 years ago.



*The basalt-capped layers of volcanic ash and welded tuff at Painted Point*

## FIRST PEOPLE ON THE SHORES OF LAKE SURPRISE

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When people arrived in Surprise Valley more than 10,000 years ago, they would have found a 50-mile (80 kilometers) long lake along the edge of the Warner Mountains. The hills surrounding Pleistocene Lake Surprise were much greener than today and people hunted now-extinct species of camels, horses, and bison. Beginning about 5,000 B.C. and lasting for approximately 2,000 years, the climate warmed considerably and the Great Basin experienced a severe drought. During this time, the Great Basin was largely uninhabitable except for unique places such as Surprise Valley.

By 4,500 B.C., people were living along the edges of the present-day lakes on the basin floors of Surprise Valley. Around 3,000 B.C. the climate became wetter and grasslands expanded across the northern Great Basin. Herds of large game increased, and people communally hunted pronghorn antelope in large drives.

Yet, conditions drastically changed. Beginning 1,300 years ago this region has experienced decades-long, intermittent droughts. Perhaps due to these unpredictable droughts, the introduction of the bow-and-arrow, or the arrival of new groups, people abandoned these winter villages and began living in different parts of the valley.

## THE NORTHERN PAIUTE OF SURPRISE VALLEY

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The Northern Paiute people are an integral part of this community and have been in this valley since time immemorial. The traditional territory of the Northern Paiute spanned a vast area across parts of California, Nevada, Idaho and Oregon.

The Northern Paiute traditional language, Numu, is similar to the language spoken by the ancient Aztecs of Mexico and the Ute language in Utah.

The Northern Paiute people of the valley call themselves the “Gidutikadu,” meaning the groundhog-eaters.



Yellow-bellied marmot (*Marmota flaviventris*) or “groundhog”

The Bidwell area was one of the major winter Paiute campsites. These hunter-gatherers moved with the seasons to the best sources of food.

In spring, they traveled to the hills in the east to gather food such as biscuit root, onions, and ya'pa' roots. In the summer they found game and seeds available in the mountains and on the volcanic plateaus. Fall was a time when family groups went into the canyons for berries and wild plums.

The Fort Bidwell Indian Reservation in Fort Bidwell and the Cedarville Rancheria in Cedarville continue to be the home to many Northern Paiute.

## THE BIG EMPTY

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Along the emigrant trail, the Great Basin was known as the “Big Empty.” Yet, contrary to this characterization, the region was full of people whose families had lived there for generations.



In less than 10 years, the indigenous American Indians would go from a rare, sporadic encounter with a foreigner to witnessing tens of thousands of emigrants crossing their homeland. Many of the early emigrant trails followed trails created and used by American Indians.

The emigrants and their livestock depleted the forage along the trails, scared off wild game that the local tribes depended on, and brought diseases such as smallpox.

Military records indicate that most attacks by the Northern Paiute against wagon trains were nocturnal raids that targeted the cattle and horses. Animals were stolen or wounded to be eaten later. The loss of livestock, whether from starvation, dehydration, or raids, was no small matter to the pioneers. Oxen (cattle trained to pull wagons) were vital to the emigrant families.

Once they reached their destination, the families relied on milk from the cattle to make butter, cheese and other dairy products that were hard to come by on rural homesteads. On the trail, these animals pulled the wagon which carried families' belongings. Without livestock, people would have to begin their new life with only the items they could carry on their backs.

## EARLY HOMESTEADING IN SURPRISE

Emigrants traveling the Applegate-Lassen trail passed through Surprise Valley in the 1840s and 1850s on their way to California and Oregon.



Unidentified man with dog in Surprise Valley circa 1885

As available land in the west became scarce, people began heading east and homesteading in the rural areas of northeastern California and southeastern Oregon.

Due to a drought in the Sacramento Valley, a number of people came to Surprise Valley to homestead in the early 1860s.

The earliest settlers homesteaded at the northern end of the valley on the winter villages of the Northern Paiute. By 1865 there were about 300 settlers throughout the valley.

As tension between the settlers and the Northern Paiute increased, the settlers petitioned the government to send Army troops for protection. A military fort was established and named

in honor of U.S. Representative John Bidwell from Sacramento, California.

In 1866, 105 Army soldiers were stationed at Fort Bidwell and conflicts with local tribes ended in Paiute and pioneer casualties.

Townsend Street in Cedarville is named for the pioneer settler James Townsend who was killed in one of these battles. In 1892, the Army presence was no longer needed and the buildings were turned into a regional Indian school and hospital.

The communities of Fort Bidwell, Lake City, Cedarville, and Eagleville that sprung up in the valley in the 1860's were outposts in the wilderness. Because of their distance from the cities in California (freight wagons took 17 days for the round trip to Redding), people in the valley were self-sufficient. They produced their own lumber using steam sawmills, and flour from water-powered mills such as the Lake City Flour Mill.

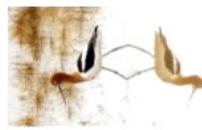
Merchants not only sold goods, but served as buyers and the valley's bankers. The residents established schools, hospitals, fire protection, and law enforcement.

Surprise Valley today is "hay ranching" country. Ranchers winter their cattle on valley pastures. In mid-April "buckaroos" move the cattle onto public rangelands managed by the BLM Applegate Field Office in northeast California and northwest Nevada.



*Combine harvester and thresher in Surprise Valley circa 1895*

In September and October, the "gathering" takes place when cattle are taken from the range and returned to their home ranches in and around Surprise Valley. While some cattle are transported in trucks and trailers, others return home on traditional cattle drives- ranchers on horseback guide the livestock along roads (including the Byway) to their winter pasture.



Mosquito Lake

15

2.4

16

(0.1)

17

2.8

18

4.0

19

1.5

20

3.0

21

0.1

22

4.4

23

0.4

24

(0.4)

25

0.2

26

5.2



11.1



California Nevada

Fee Reservoir

(2.1)



Lake Annie

(4.1)

To Adel, Ore.

CR 4

CR 1

CR 6

CR 2

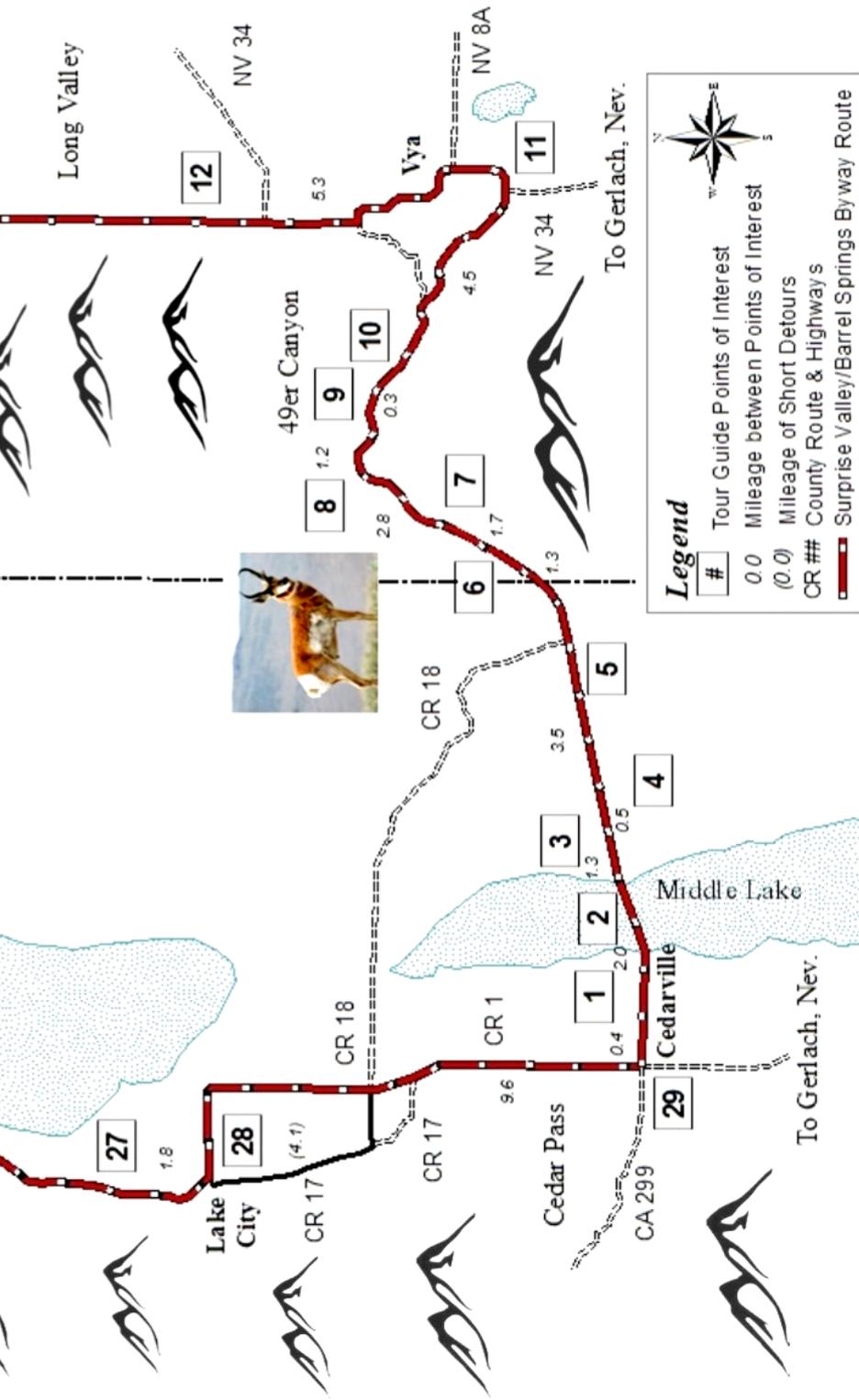
Fort Bidwell

Fandango Pass

Upper Lake

8.8





**Legend**

- # Tour Guide Points of Interest
- 0.0 Mileage between Points of Interest
- (0.0) Mileage of Short Detours
- CR ## County Route & Highway s
- Surprise Valley/Barrel Springs Byway Route

# BYWAY DRIVING TOUR

The Byway tour is a 90-mile loop that begins and ends in Cedarville. Allow a minimum of three hours for the tour. Take your time and enjoy the peace and quiet. Points of interest are numbered in order on the route starting to the east (CA Highway 299).



An equally enjoyable journey can be made by starting out of Cedarville to the north on County Road 1 and following the points of interest in reverse order. The figures in parenthesis indicate the distance between the points of interest. The mileage begins at the junction of CA Highway 299 and County Road 1 in Cedarville (at the four-way stop). Cell phone service typically ends at the California-Nevada state line.

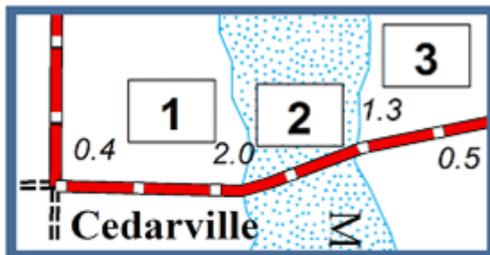
## 1. THE BIG SLIDE

(0.4) On the highway east of Cedarville look directly above the road at the mountain on the east side of the valley where you can see the results of a massive earthquake.



At the top of the ridge is a sheer cliff in a semi-circle shape. The cliff appears steeper and sharper because it is newer and has experienced less erosion. Below the cliff, the collapsed hillside descends to the base of the mountain.

The slide is more than 10,000 years old and resulted when a jarring earthquake forced a 15-foot uplift of the ridge.



## 2. ALKALI LAKES

(2.0) Surprise Valley is occupied by a series of alkaline lakes- Lower, Middle, and Upper Alkali Lakes.

The combined surface area of the lakes is approximately 85 square miles (220 square kilometers).

The lake beds are typically flooded with shallow water during the winter and spring, but dry up during most summers.

Although the water is not potable for humans, the lakes are habitat for fairy brine shrimp and migratory birds.



## 3. MIDDLE LAKE AND THE BISON HUNTERS

(1.3) After you pass the east shoreline of the lakebed, take a closer look at the landscape. You will see sand dunes, salt grass flats, and bushes growing on the tops of little mounds of soil. It may look like an arid desert, but 6,000 years ago the lake had plentiful water and there were freshwater marshes along the east shore.

Archaeological excavations in Surprise Valley have discovered prehistoric villages that existed here before the first cities and civilizations in the Middle East.

The people who lived here built large semi-subterranean lodges with walls and roofs of woven mats supported by a wooden framework. A central hearth was surrounded by sturdy posts 6-8 feet high with the top and sides covered with soil for insulation.



People returned to these winter villages repeatedly for thousands of years. Archaeological evidence revealed that these people ate a variety of food. They hunted large game such as bighorn sheep, deer, antelope, and bison, small game such as jackrabbits and cottontail rabbits, and waterfowl. Edible roots and seeds were also eaten.

Approximately 700 years ago, for reasons unknown, most of these villages were abandoned and people moved elsewhere on the valley floor.

## 4. HOT SPRINGS AND FAULTS

(0.5) Both sides of the valley have earthquake faults and you are passing over one now. The faults have deep shafts hundreds of yards wide formed of crushed and ground rock where water can flow through. When the water reaches the deep hot layers of rock it is heated and surges back to the surface as hot springs.

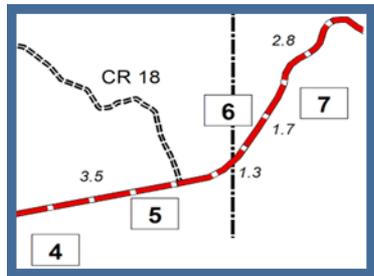
On cold mornings steam from these hot springs forms a thick cloud that spreads out for a mile like a giant flat mushroom. There are seven hot springs throughout Surprise Valley.

## 5. LIVING IN A RAIN SHADOW

(3.5) This is an ideal location to see the effects of a rain shadow. Most of the storms that provide rain and snow to Surprise Valley come from the Pacific Ocean. As these storms move west they are blocked by the tall Warner Mountains. Consequently, the west side of the mountains receive twice as much precipitation than the eastern slopes.

The rain shadow effect is so severe along this side of the valley that even a gain in elevation does not change it. Although the Hayes Range is more than 7,500 feet high it lacks the evergreen forest that cover the slopes of the Warner Mountains.

As a result, plants and animals living east of the Warner Mountains have adapted to survive in arid conditions.



## 6. SOARING HIGH ABOVE

(1.3) The abundance of food in Surprise Valley supports a large population of eagles, hawks, and falcons.

Eagles are North America's largest birds of prey and are twice the size of hawks. Golden eagles nest in canyons and cliffs, including those in front of you. Mature bald eagles can be recognized by their white head which gives them a "bald" appearance. While bald eagles do not nest

These sagebrush uplands are also important hunting grounds for golden eagles and prairie falcons.



The brown feathered eagles are twice the size of hawks and nest in the cliffs you see in front of you and to the north.

The open ground between bushes helps them hunt for rabbits and rodents for their young.

If you see a falcon cruising you may want to stop and watch, for the power dive of the falcon onto its prey is one of nature's memorable moments.



## **7. GRAZING ON PUBLIC LANDS**

(1.7) Since the arrival of emigrants in the mid-1800s, livestock grazing has been an integral part of public lands.

Prior to the 1934 Taylor Grazing Act, there were conflicts between ranchers across the West (such as the Sheep and Cattle Wars in the late 1800s and early 1900s) regarding who could graze public lands.

Overgrazing depleted forage and caused severe erosion along streams across the West.

Congress passed the Taylor Grazing Act to regulate livestock grazing on public lands to improve rangeland conditions. Today, the BLM Applegate Field Office manages 201 livestock grazing allotments in multiple counties in northeastern California and northwestern Nevada.

These allotments are divided into pastures which are used to manage where and when cattle and sheep graze. The terms and conditions for grazing on public lands are set forth in permits issued by the BLM to public land ranchers.

## 8. WILD HORSES

(2.8) A small herd of wild horses from the Carter Reservoir Herd lives along this part of the Byway. The horses winter within a couple of miles of the Byway and move north into higher country during the summer. The herd is isolated from other horses to the east and south.

The BLM is responsible for managing the herd and sees it as an opportunity to preserve and foster the primitive color and markings of the original Spanish barb horses.

The distinctive characteristics include a dark stripe along the spine and zebra-like stripes on the legs.

Periodically, excess horses are gathered and offered for adoption. Contact any BLM office for adoption information.



*Wild horses from the Carter Reservoir herd*

## 9. REDWOODS AND MAPLES

(1.2) Before the mountains of the Coast Range, Sierra Nevada, and Warners uplifted, there were lowland hills from here to the Pacific Ocean. About 11 million years ago the warmer and wetter hills were covered with lush forests of sequoias and maple trees. To the north of the road are areas with petrified wood and leaf fossils.



*Fossil leaves*

The leaves are located in a band of white ashy earth which can be seen from the Byway near the top of a nearby hill (about a third of a mile from the road). The wood is further to the northeast and can be found by following the jeep trail north to where it ends on the top of a knoll. Look on the east side of the knoll, near the top.

## 10. CANYON OF THE 49ERS

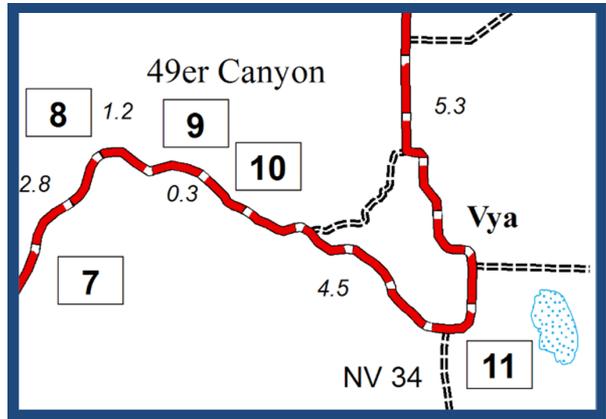


Henry Lind's 1941 photo of 49 Rock

(0.3) You are now on the Applegate-Lassen Trail, one of the routes of the 1849 California gold rush. Pioneers often used axle grease to sign rocks with their initials or the year they passed through. For example, the first “49” marking on Fortynine Rock is said to have been put on with wagon axle grease. For the pioneers, this rock marked Fortynine Camp and was the last place to camp with good water before crossing the dry basin floor of Surprise Valley.

## 11. 49 LAKE

(4.5) Weeks before the emigrants reached this area, their journals depicted a “dismal, horrible, and hellish” experience. They had crossed the Black Rock Desert from the “Humbug” River (Humboldt) and traveled through rugged canyons.



Months had passed since the pioneers left Missouri civilization and many of the emigrants were struggling. The weary 49ers came straight west across the valley and Fortynine Lake below you. In late summer and fall the lake was normally dry, cattle had died or were weak, people were tired or ill, and belongings had been abandoned. By the time they reached this valley they knew the meaning of suffering along the emigrant trail. An estimated 1 in 17 perished on the journey. The first view of the mountains of California was eagerly anticipated.

## 12. THE MYSTERY OF THE MASSACRE RIM

(5.3) Unlike Egyptian hieroglyphs, the meaning of prehistoric American Indian pictographs (painted rock art) and petroglyphs (carved rock art) remains unknown.

Some experts believe that the images may relate to historical events, cultural heroes, or visions experienced by shamans. Across the valley to the east you can see Massacre Rim. On the mountain is one of the Great Basin's most mysterious petroglyphs, a seven-foot-long fish!

Most of the top of Massacre Rim is a BLM Wilderness Study Area (WSA). The BLM will manage it for conservation until Congress determines whether it qualifies as wilderness. The 101,290-acre area is one of 60 WSA's in Nevada. Keep an eye out- you may see California bighorn sheep on the steep escarpment of Massacre Rim!



## 13. JOHN C. FREMONT, EXPLORER

(11.1) The Fremont exploration and mapping expedition came through here between Christmas and New Years in 1843. Fremont wrote in his journal that he had seen few people except for the small band of Paiute men, women and children on a well used Native American trail south of Oregon.

He noted that they reacted as if they had never seen white people.

Fremont's expedition to this area ended in 1846, when he departed for the Sonoma region to support the Bear Flag Revolt, an insurrection of American settlers challenging Mexican authorities. The revolt was instrumental in California becoming a state in 1850.

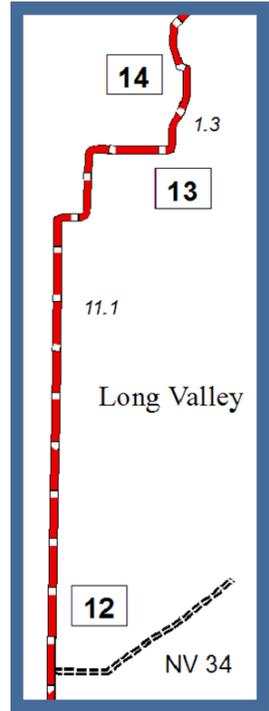
## 14. WE ARE GRITTY AND BRIGHT

(1.3) The theme of unfulfilled dreams is repeated historically throughout the West. Gone are more than 40 families who homesteaded here in Long and Mosquito valleys, and three schools in Vya and Beulah.

Homesteading on federal land had four major peak periods in American history with the last occurring from 1901 to 1921.

The Enlarged Homestead Act of 1909 increased the amount of land homesteaders could claim from 160 acres to 320 acres. In 1910 more land was homesteaded than in any year in American history.

For about a decade there was adequate rain for crops in Long Valley and the spirit of the people is reflected in the following letter:



*"We are starting out new in Long Valley, but we are brave. We are gritty and bright. We also are true to our valley. We know you would see a good sight if you rode through the sagebrush desert of a short five years ago, and see the grain and grasses that are now ready for the mower. The gardens, the fruit and chickens, the horses and pigs and the cows, the rich loamy soil is now all cleared and ready for the plows. Oh, we're not asleep nor absent but though we are slow, we are wise and ask you to sit up and take notice, we are not far behind Surprise"*

... Newspaper letter, dated July 22, 1914

## 15. MIGRATION REST STOP



(4.3) As you drive on the levee over Mosquito Lake, you may see water in the spring and early summer.

Intermittent lakes are lifesavers for migrating birds because there is plenty of food and predators are deterred by the water and mud. Sneaking up on sleeping birds at night is nearly impossible.

Mosquito Lake is particularly popular with shore birds that are characterized by their long legs, pointed and sometimes curved beaks.

If a flock of birds flies by you displaying a striking black and white pattern you are looking at a flock of willets.



## 16. BASIN AND RANGE

(2.4) You are standing on the edge of a rising block fault. The block fault is lined by valleys, Surprise Valley along the western edge and Mosquito Valley and Long Valley along the eastern edge.

The cliffs to the east near Massacre Rim clearly mark an uplifting block of land. This repetition of block faults (ranges) and valleys (basins) repeats from the Warner Mountains all the way to the Rocky Mountains.

You can also see how the environment changes with elevation. There is little moisture on the basin floors, so the valleys are covered with drought-tolerant plants. As elevation increases on the surrounding uplands, springs fed by the melted winter snowpack provide water even in the late summer. Distinctive communities of plants and trees grow on these uplands and are not seen again for miles. The Great Basin has been described as mountain islands surrounded by an ocean of sagebrush. This unique landscape has evolved over thousands of years.

A short (0.1 mile) drive or walk down the dirt road to the southeast provides a lovely view of Mosquito Lake and the mountains beyond.

## 17. ASPENS AND FAWNS

(2.8) You know there IS water when you see a grove of aspen trees. Just like an oasis, the trees serve as critical habitat for wildlife, providing food and shelter from predators and an ideal place for mule deer to give birth to their offspring.

In late summer the deer take their young up the mountain to feast on the late-growing young leaves.

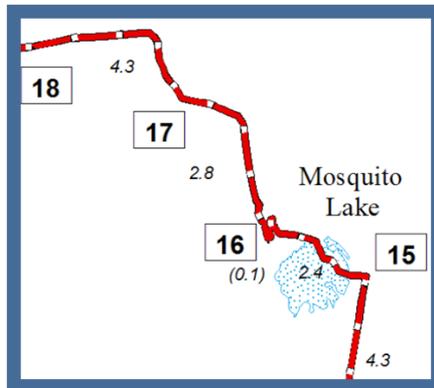
## 18. WILD GARDENS

(4.3) More than 80 edible roots and tubers were used by American Indians in the West at the time Euro-American settlers arrived.

Like “wild gardens,” these plants were managed by American Indians over long periods of time by means of burning, selective harvesting, tilling and weeding.

Fields of *ya'pa'* (*Perideridia* species) can be seen on top of volcanic plateaus as they are well suited to rocky, thin clay soils.

The Northern Paiute gathered large quantities of these roots in the spring and summer which were eaten raw, boiled, or dried in the sun and stored for the winter.



## 19. STRUTTING AND BOOMING

(4.0) The sagebrush uplands are important breeding and brood rearing habitat for the Greater Sage-Grouse.

These chicken-sized birds breed in areas called “leks” with breeding displays of strutting males vying for the females’ attention.

The males also produce a booming noise with their vocal sacs which can be heard from miles away. If you see strutting birds, it is best to stay several hundred yards away so as not to disturb them. In spring, the hens nest in dense sagebrush to protect their young from predators.

During winter sage grouse live amongst the taller sagebrush where they primarily eat sagebrush leaves.

The BLM is committed to maintaining and improving the diverse vegetation that the sage grouse depend upon.

## 20. WHERE THE DEER AND THE ANTELOPE PLAY

(1.5) Despite the name, pronghorn antelope are more closely related to giraffes than antelope.

They are the fastest native land animal in North America and can run up to 65 miles per hour (105 km/h). They evolved to be this fast to outrun the American cheetah (now extinct).

The sagebrush-covered plateaus are important habitat for pronghorn. Sagebrush and forbs such as blue mustard, buckwheat, and yarrow are rich in protein. The brush is low enough that the antelope can see predators and feel safe enough to birth their kids in early May.

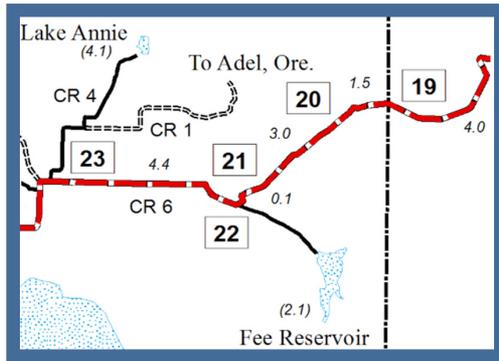


*Mule deer*



*Antelope*

*The white patches on the belly and the neck distinguishes the antelope from the mule deer.*



## 21. LAKE SURPRISE BEACH

(3.0) Imagine the first humans to see Surprise Valley walking over this spot and looking at the huge lake in front of them with the high mountains in the backdrop.

More than 10,000 years ago Lake Surprise was filled by rainfall and melting glaciers from the mountains, making the entire valley in front of you full of water. It was a cooler, temperate time and the hillsides were full of grasses, wildflowers, and evergreen trees.

These people lived during the Ice Age when hairy mammoths, camels, horses, giant bison, musk ox, and sabre-tooth cats roamed this land. If you look closely at the hills you can see the terraces that represent the old lake levels.

## 22. FEE RESERVOIR

(0.1) Two miles to the east is a small campground with water, restrooms and a boat ramp. Fishing is subject to change depending on water and weather conditions.

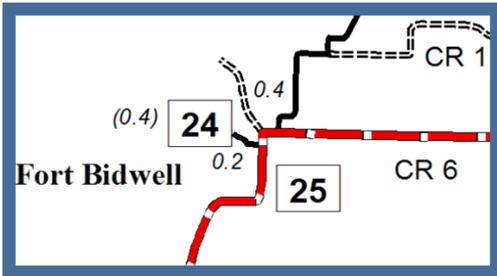


## 23. LAKE ANNIE

(4.4) Lake Annie is five miles north from this junction on a passable gravel road. The lake was once a bay on Pleistocene Lake Surprise. It is the only freshwater part of the ancient lake that survived. Fishing is permitted.

## 24. FORT BIDWELL CEMETERY

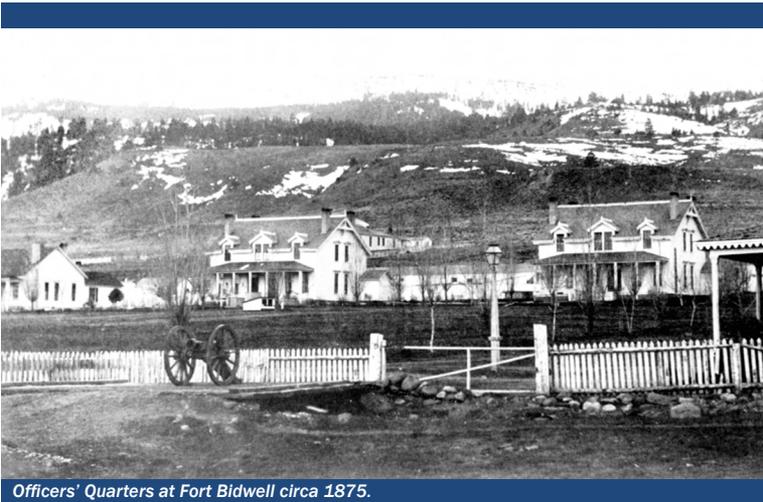
(0.4) Camp Bidwell was a hastily erected U. S. Cavalry post built in 1863 after Surprise Valley settlers petitioned the government for protection from the Paiute Indians.



Life at the fort was challenging. In the beginning, the majority of the enlisted men were 23 years old or younger. Desertions were common; small groups left and seldom returned.

A few days after Christmas in 1877, Sgt. Frank Lewis took his life on the steps of the Bidwell store in front of his men. The troops raised money to construct a tombstone with an inscription commemorating Sgt. Lewis.

The monument is in the cavalry section of Fort Bidwell cemetery that you can visit. The inscription reads, "This monument was erected by his company comrades as a testimonial of their love for one who was a universal favorite with all who knew him." He was thirty years old.



Officers' Quarters at Fort Bidwell circa 1875.



*Kober's Drygoods Store in Fort Bidwell circa 1908 (above) and in 2016 (top left)*

## 25. FORT BIDWELL TOWN

(0.2) Historic buildings such as the Fort Bidwell Hotel, Kober's Drygoods (pictured above) and the community church still look as they did over 100 years ago.

In the back of Kober's you can find out who was buried before the turn of the 20th century by reading the inscriptions on the wall.

The wall served as the town's original cemetery record and most of the names are faintly legible. The Fort Bidwell General Store was one of California's oldest stores in continuous operation.

In order to be fire-proof, it was constructed from stone and when it was built in 1874 this was truly an outpost in the Wild West.

The last time the General Store sold gas it cost 89 cents per gallon.

## 26. FANDANGO PASS

(5.2) In 1846, the Applegate brothers led their first wagon train across the Applegate Trail and over this pass through the Warner Mountains. The Applegate Trail was established as an alternative to the more dangerous Oregon Trail which required pioneers to float their wagons down the treacherous Columbia River.

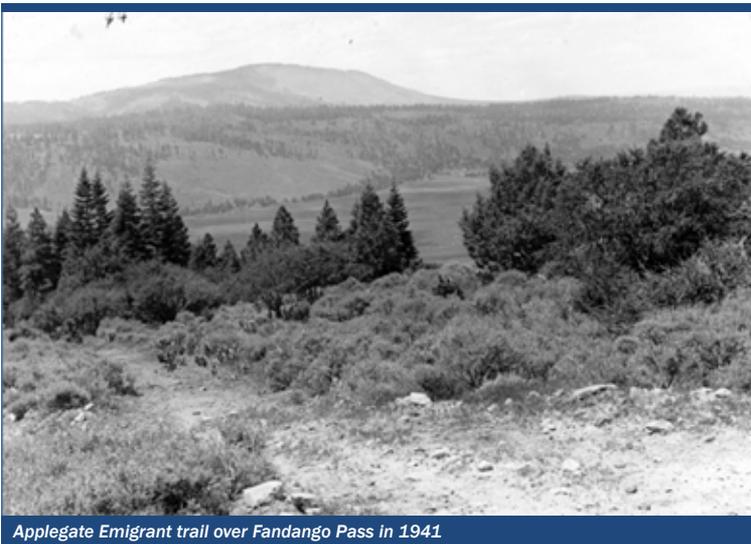
This pass was originally referred to as Lassen's Pass by the pioneers and renamed Fandango Pass in the 1870s. Fandango refers to a popular 19th century dance. It only takes a few minutes to drive to the top where you can experience a breathtaking view.



History buffs may want to search for wagon ruts where the pioneers hitched multiple teams to a wagon to climb the steep hillside.

More than one wagon broke free to go crashing back down the mountain. The rock retaining wall on the hillside just before the Forest Service sign was built for the military road to Fort Bidwell.

On the west side of Fandango Pass is Goose Lake where in 1848 Peter Lassen created his famous "short cut" to the central valley of California called the Lassen Trail.



Applegate Emigrant trail over Fandango Pass in 1941

## 27. MUD VOLCANO

(8.8) In 1951, approximately 300,000 tons of mud and water erupted from the hot springs midway between the road and the lakebed below you. Mud particles were thrown about a mile into the air and pea-sized pellets landed as far as four miles away.

The event created 15-foot tall mud cones which have since eroded away and are now covered with grass.

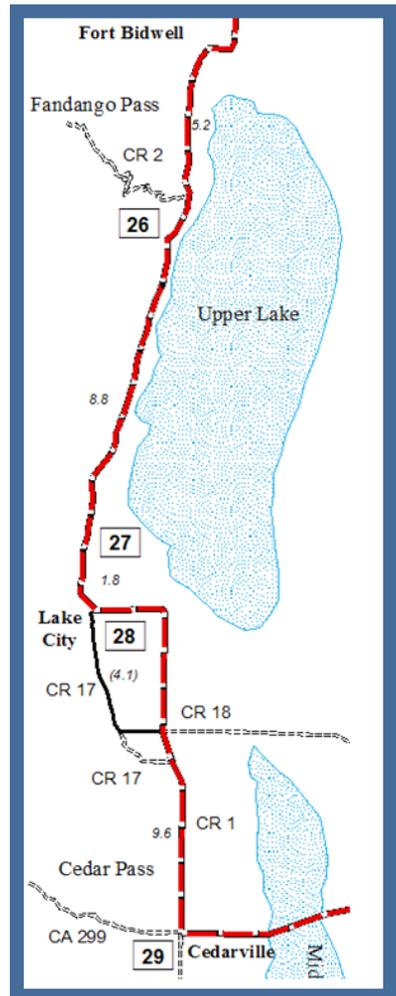
You can still see some of the small ponds in the hot water marsh. Like other hot water sources in the valley, the water can be boiling or near-boiling and extreme care should be taken when exploring hot springs.

## 28. LAKE CITY

(1.8) Lake City was once the largest town in Modoc County. It was first settled in 1865, and by 1868 the town included a gristmill, hotel, saloons, and a post office. Idaho traffic greatly influenced the early growth of towns in Surprise Valley as it was located along the mail route between Susanville, California and Boise, Idaho. Lake City was also considered the halfway point between the Sacramento Valley and Owyhee mines in Idaho. The 1870 Lake City Flour Mill can still be seen on South Water Street.

## 29. CEDARVILLE

(9.6) Cedarville was founded in 1864 and was originally known as Deep Creek. The Center Street Park is an ideal place for picnicking and relaxing. You can see the Townsend Cabin, the first cabin built in Cedarville and which was later operated as a trading post by William T. Cressler and John H. Bonner. Cressler and Bonner built a much larger two-story store in 1874 that still dominates the west side of Main Street.



# TOURIST SERVICES INFORMATION

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## SERVICES

### Cedarville



Gasoline, Hardware Store, Grocery Store, Lodging, RV Camping, Restaurants, Hospital and Walk-in Clinic

### Fort Bidwell



Lodging, Restaurant

## RESTROOMS



Cedarville Park, Fee Reservoir Campground

For more information: Contact the BLM office in Cedarville, 602 Cressler, just off California Highway 299 and clearly signed.

Telephone: (530) 279-6101.  
Monday-Friday 7:45 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

## CAMPGROUNDS



Fee Reservoir Campground along the Byway. Stough Reservoir (a Forest Service campground) on California Highway 299 on Cedar Pass. Camping is also permitted on the BLM land along the Byway.

## ALONG THE BYWAY

Outside of the towns listed on the opposite page, there are no services of any kind. There is typically no cell phone service east of the California-Nevada state line.

### IMPORTANT SAFETY TIPS FOR AN ENJOYABLE TRIP

- ◆ Before leaving Cedarville, check your gas level, air pressure in your spare tire, and tire changing equipment.
- ◆ Do you have at least a gallon of water to drink in case you have mechanical problems and have to wait for someone to come along? If you have mechanical problems, raise the hood and trunk cover as a signal for help and wait in your vehicle.
- ◆ If there has been a snowstorm or a big rainstorm, check in Cedarville about road conditions before you leave the valley. Unseasonal snowstorms may occur in May and October.
- ◆ The road west out of Mosquito Valley is narrow and fairly steep and not recommended for long trailers and long motor homes. There are two improved creek bed crossings on the Barrel Springs road where the presence of rocks may be a hazard for vehicles with very low clearance. When in doubt, stop, get out and assess the road segment in question.

## WILDFLOWERS YOU MAY SEE ALONG THE WAY

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**Wild Onions (*Allium*) :** Found near sagebrush and have an unmistakable garlic-like aroma when crushed. The pink to purple flowers appear in April as a ball-like cluster at the tip of the stem.

**Lupines (*Lupinus*) :** These members of the pea family grow from 2-2 1/2 feet tall. Blooms in May and June with purple and blue the most common colors.



**Sand Lily (*Leucocrinum montanum*) :** A short, 6-inch, beautiful and sweet-scented herb with white flowers of six petals. Blooms in April and May.

**Rabbitbrush (*Ericameria nauseosa*) :** A widespread twiggy shrub with narrow, long, silver-haired leaves. Its golden flowers are a feature of late summer. The yellow flowers of sagebrush also bloom in the fall.





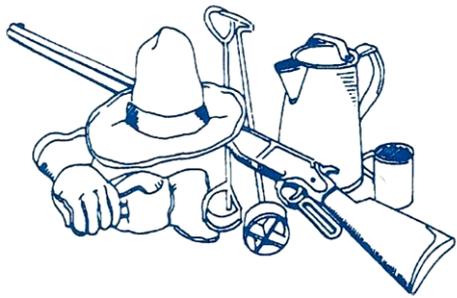
We need your help to protect our archaeological and historic sites.

Taking arrowheads and other historic objects is against the law and severely punished. But more importantly, the loss or disturbance may destroy the opportunity to make a scientific breakthrough in our understanding of the past.

If you discover an artifact, leave it in place, note its location, and notify the nearest BLM or other Federal office.

We have produced this brochure for your enjoyment and would like to hear from you about your experience on the Byway.

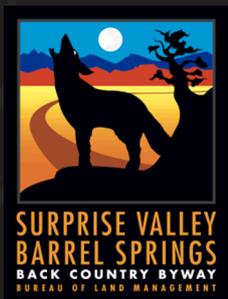
Also, if you have any suggestions on how to improve the Byway or this brochure, let us know at the BLM office in Cedarville.



Surprise Field Station  
602 Cressler Street  
Cedarville, CA 96104  
(530) 279-6101



*Surprise Valley-Barrel Springs Byway*



**Bureau of Land Management  
Surprise Field Station**

602 Cressler Street  
Cedarville, CA 96104  
(530) 279-6101

**Bureau of Land Management  
Applegate Field Office**

708 W 12th Street  
Alturas, California 96101  
(530) 233-4666

[www.blm.gov/California](http://www.blm.gov/California)

*Historical photos courtesy of the California State University, Chico, Meriam Library Special Collections; Greater Sage-Grouse photo courtesy of Philip Knorr; Surprise Valley-Barrel Springs Byway photo courtesy of Laurie Sada; Milky Way photo courtesy of Richie Bednarski; wild horse photo courtesy of Rebecca Carter; contemporary photo of Kober's Store by Claude Singleton; fossil leaf photo courtesy of Jennifer Mueller.*

