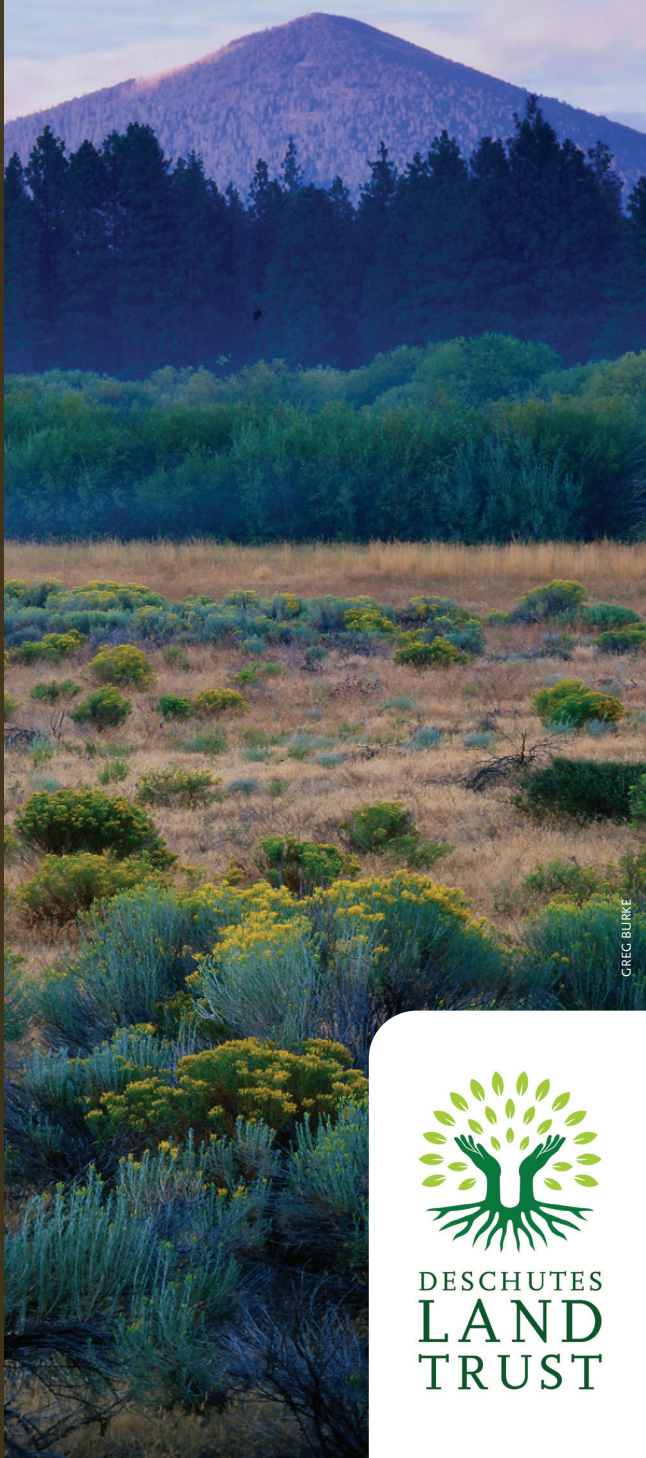


SANTIAM WAGON ROAD

In the 1860s, a new road was built over the central Cascades connecting the valley to desert.

This newly built road, the Santiam Wagon Road, helped people travel more easily from the Willamette Valley across the rugged Cascades, to the forests, meadows, and deserts of Central Oregon. Where did the road lead in the high desert? What was it like to travel back then? Learn more about the Santiam Wagon Road to find the answers.



GREG BURKE



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FREIGHT WAGONS NEAR SHANIKO. PHOTO: BOWMAN MUSEUM.

Reconstructing the Route

The Santiam Wagon Road was built in the mid 1860s, so how do we know today the route it followed?

- **Historic surveys:** Public land surveyors were required to record local landmarks. J.H. McClung was responsible for the first known surveys of the area in 1870. His maps indicate the route of the road and include natural landmarks and established trails.
- **Physical evidence:** Old tree blazes, wheel ruts, and piles of rocks (cleared to make a path for the wagons), can also help with reconstruction.
- **LIDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) technology:** LIDAR uses lasers to accurately map landform contours beneath any surface vegetation. This technology clearly shows the path of the wagon road.

Visiting the Santiam Wagon Road

See remnants of the Santiam Wagon Road at the Deschutes Land Trust's Whychus Canyon Preserve. Historic Wagon Road stopping points can also be seen at the Land Trust's Indian Ford Meadow Preserve and Camp Polk Meadow Preserve. Visit today!



JOHN WILLIAMS



Learn more about the Santiam Wagon Road, leer en español, listen with an audio reader, or download for reading later.



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