



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Oregon Heritage Commission

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November 7, 2017

Alice Trindle
Eastern Oregon Visitors Association
15477 Sky Ranch Lane
Haines, OR 97833

Dear Alice and Oregon Trails Coalition Partners,

Thank you for submitting a request to the Oregon Heritage Commission to declare a statewide celebration for the 175th anniversary of the emigrants traveling over the Oregon Trail. The Commission understands the significance of the Oregon Trail to the state's overall history and to the communities nearby the trail.

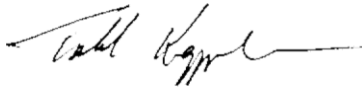
The Commission would like to commend the Coalition on its effort to connect with the national recognition of the anniversary and to develop marketing for heritage tourism to areas around the Oregon Trail and other significant trails in the state. This effort will greatly impact communities and their heritage organizations. The Commission is happy to assist this effort with letters of support and through our various media outlets.

At its October 23 meeting, the Commission voted against declaring the 175th Anniversary of the Oregon Trail a statewide celebration. This is in not a reflection on the value of your effort, but is instead a recognition of limitations set forth by the very specific language of the statute that gives the Commission the authority to make a declaration. The language used under statute is specifically for a statewide "celebration." Commission members felt some aspects of the trail's history would not be cause for celebration among all residents of Oregon. The Commission is making a concerted effort to include all Oregon voices in the heritage efforts it supports, and this decision is based on that effort.

The discussion has prompted the Commission to start a conversation about this statute and administrative rule. The Commission plans to seek revisions in the statutory language so that it might declare a “commemoration” of this or other events in the future.

Again, thank you for your work to incorporate Oregon’s heritage and historic places in your tourism marketing effort. These resources are often overlooked as tourism assets. Please let us know if we can be of additional assistance to this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Todd Kepple", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Todd Kepple
Oregon Heritage Commission Chair