



Nature
HISTORY
Discovery

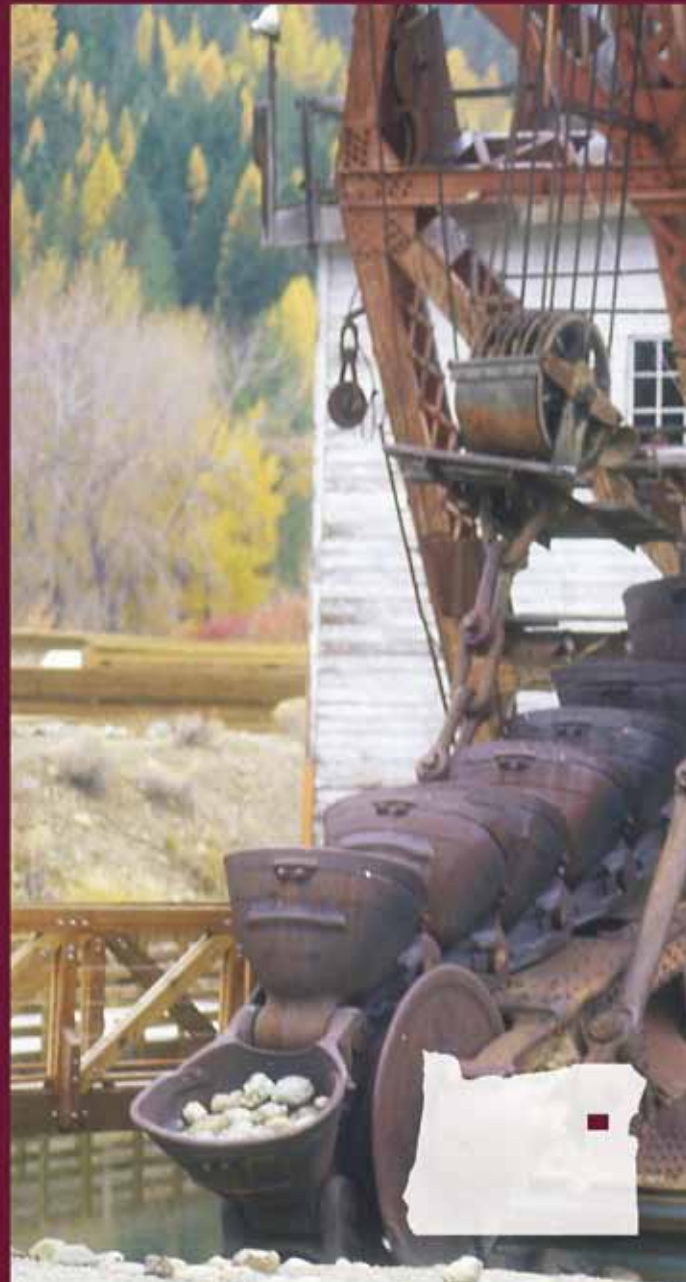
Sumpter Valley Dredge State Heritage Area

The Sumpter Valley Dredge State Heritage Area and the town of Sumpter are 30 miles west of Baker City at the base of the Elkhorn Range of the Blue Mountains. The park is open for day use every day until dusk, May-October.

Interpretive displays on board and in a nearby gazebo explain how the dredge worked.

Schools and other groups may arrange tours by calling 541-894-2486.

A visitor center near the dredge offers maps, interpretive items and souvenirs. Ask about gold panning and things to do in and around the town of Sumpter.



Discovery



“What happened here?”

Many visitors discovering the Sumpter Valley for the first time have probably asked that question. Driving into the valley, you see scenic mountain peaks, the Elkhorns, rising above a forest-ringed valley floor dominated by... piles of gravel. These mounds are called tailings—refuse left behind by people’s quest for gold.

Most of the Sumpter Valley Dredge State Heritage Area consists of these tailings. And, one of the tools used to dig up the valley floor is the park’s centerpiece—a monument to human ingenuity surrounded by the restorative wonders of nature.

HISTORY



The Dredge

The tool used to plow up most of what was once pasture and open meadows along the Powder River is a five-story vessel known as the Sumpter Valley Dredge. Wider than a large riverboat, the dredge is now grounded where it stopped operating in 1954. It is one of the nation’s oldest surviving gold-digging dredges, (as opposed to the more familiar dredges used to keep rivers navigable for shipping).

Visitors are welcome aboard from May-October. Take a self-guided tour or join a ranger-led tour to learn:

- How this vessel, weighing 1,240 tons with a 52-foot-wide hull, ended up in eastern Oregon’s Blue Mountains, 100 miles away from a navigable waterway.
- How it managed to navigate the Sumpter Valley in a pond of its own creation.
- How its 72 buckets (each weighing one ton) scooped up 1,600 acres of river valley at the rate of 280,000 cubic yards per month.
- How a three-man crew per shift kept it operating 24 hours a day, year-round.
- How it extracted \$4.5 million in gold.

Nature



The environmental triumph

Take a second glance at the tailings the dredge left as you stroll along the park’s nature trails. Listen to the sounds of waterfowl and songbirds that have reclaimed the area for habitat.

The wetlands are rich in wildlife and burgeoning vegetation. It is a model of nature’s persistence in repairing manmade damage. You may see Canada geese and several species of ducks. Also watch for kingfishers, cranes and osprey. Be alert for muskrats and the signs of resident beavers.

Visitors have 1½ miles of trails to explore. To the south and west, a half-mile of the trail winds through the wetlands past thickets of willows and cattails and along ponds, creeks and, at one point, the Powder River. A ¾-mile segment known as the North Trail follows Cracker Creek, leading to higher ground amidst the pines to the Ridge Trail. Also, watch for a ¼-mile spur leading to an overlook above the dredge and the dredge pond.

Oregon Parks and Recreation Department

725 Summer Street NE, Suite C, Salem, OR 97301
1-800-551-6949



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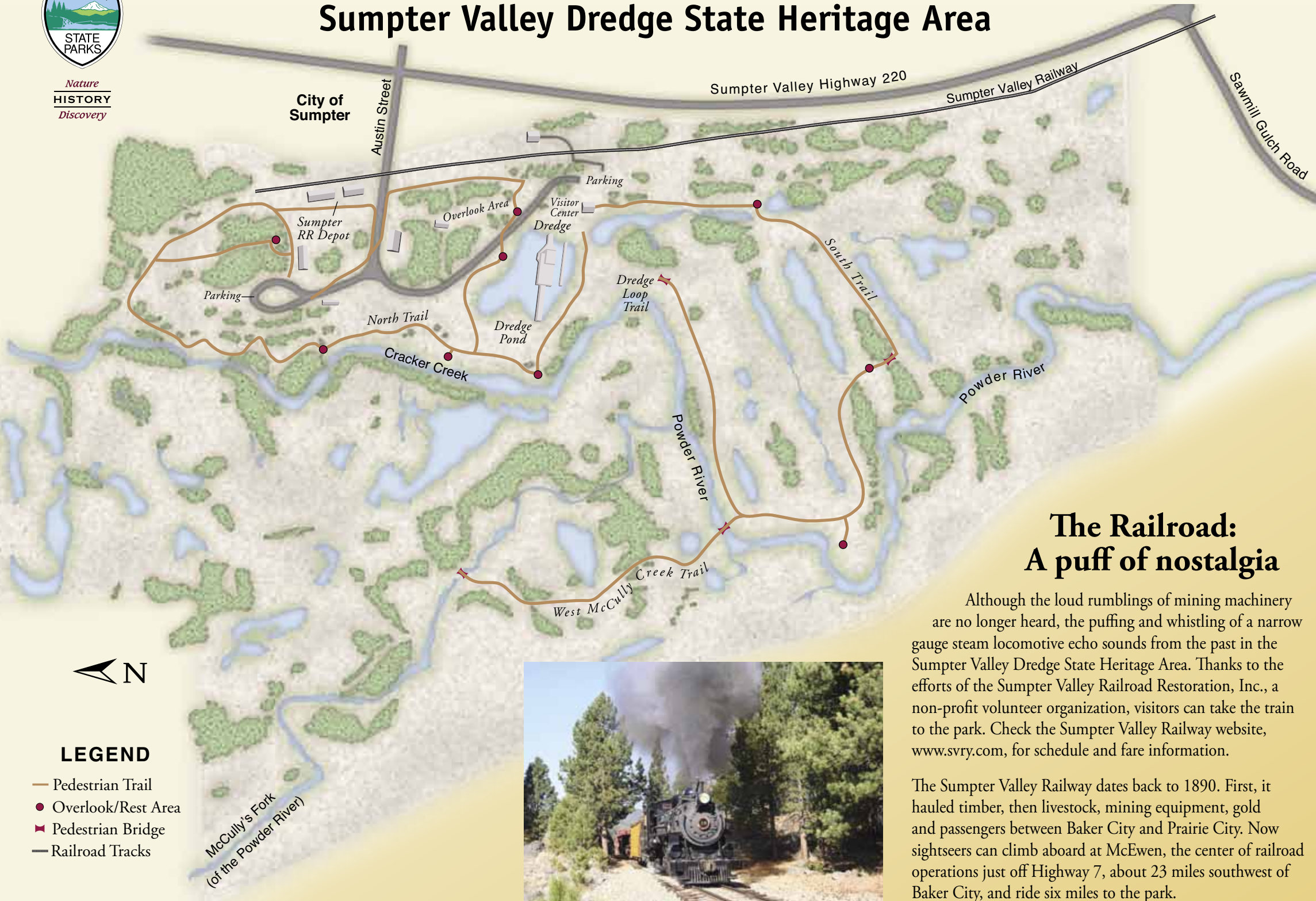
This publication is available in alternative formats on request. Write to: OPRD, 725 Summer Street NE, Suite C, Salem, OR 97301; or call 1-800-551-6949 (for the hearing impaired 1-800-735-2900).

Information and fees in this brochure subject to change without notice.



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Sumpter Valley Dredge State Heritage Area



LEGEND

- Pedestrian Trail
- Overlook/Rest Area
- Pedestrian Bridge
- Railroad Tracks



The Railroad: A puff of nostalgia

Although the loud rumblings of mining machinery are no longer heard, the puffing and whistling of a narrow gauge steam locomotive echo sounds from the past in the Sumpter Valley Dredge State Heritage Area. Thanks to the efforts of the Sumpter Valley Railroad Restoration, Inc., a non-profit volunteer organization, visitors can take the train to the park. Check the Sumpter Valley Railway website, www.svry.com, for schedule and fare information.

The Sumpter Valley Railway dates back to 1890. First, it hauled timber, then livestock, mining equipment, gold and passengers between Baker City and Prairie City. Now sightseers can climb aboard at McEwen, the center of railroad operations just off Highway 7, about 23 miles southwest of Baker City, and ride six miles to the park.

Friends of the Sumpter Valley Dredge

This non-profit organization's mission is to partner with Oregon Parks and Recreation Department to protect the outstanding resources of the Sumpter Valley Dredge State Heritage Area, which provides educational and interpretive experiences for the benefit of present and future generations. We also operate an interpretive store and museum.

Please join us! Membership dollars are used to advance the mission and goals of the Sumpter Valley Dredge State Heritage Area.

Visit www.friendsofthedredge.com

Member (Name or Business)

Address

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State

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Phone

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- | | | |
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\$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> Life
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Please enclose your check and mail to:

Friends of the Sumpter Valley Dredge, Inc.,

A Non-Profit Organization

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