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Exhibit on early naturalists of the Pacific Northwest to open at Interpretive Center

BAKER CITY, Oregon -- “Discovering the Nature of the West,” an exhibit on early naturalists of the Pacific Northwest, will open at the National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center in Baker City on Saturday.

The exhibit focuses on early European and American naturalists and explorers who came to the Northwest to map the land and record the natural history of the region. The exhibit examines the role the military, trappers, and settlers played in collecting, documenting, and naming what were then new and exotic species of plants and animals to western science. Visitors will enjoy interactive displays, maps, art, drawings, and photographs as well as biographic information on the naturalists and explorers themselves.

“From our modern perspective, it is easy to forget how foreign this landscape was to the early explorers,” says exhibit designer Kelly Burns. “Often they did not consider themselves naturalists, but when they found something new and unusual they recorded it, and they found a lot.” The names of many now familiar plants and animals like Douglas fir, Clark’s nutcracker, Nutall’s cotton tail and Townsend’s solitaire reflect this part of Northwest history.

The National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center is 5 miles east of Baker City on Highway 86. Take Exit 302 from I-84. Currently the Center is open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Beginning April 1, the hours will be 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily. For more information call (541) 523-1843 or visit oregontrail.blm.gov. The Interpretive Center is operated by the Bureau of Land Management and is a federal fee site. Children 15 and under are free. Admission for adults is \$5. Federal passes are accepted.

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