

Vale District
100 Oregon Street
P.O. Box 700
Vale, Oregon 97918



Bureau of Land Management

Leslie Gulch-Succor Creek

National Back Country Byway



Oregon's Back Country Byways

Interested in exploring Oregon's back country, those places often overlooked by highway motorists on their way to well-known attractions?

For those with the time and desire to turn off the beaten track onto a country road, Oregon's Back Country Byways provide access to a diversity of landscapes and attractions just waiting to be discovered. From forest to desert, from mountains to canyons, the willing explorer can find some of Oregon's spectacular but lesser-known attractions.

Byways provide visitors the opportunity to view a variety of wildlife in its native habitat, explore remote historic ranches, watch Native Americans dip net salmon, or photograph spectacular desert scenery.

The opportunities for outdoor adventure are unlimited.

The idea for byways came from a presidential study on recreation which said that 43% of all Americans consider driving for pleasure the most popular form of recreation in the country.

BLM's byways will meet this demand for pleasure driving, enhance recreation experiences, and better inform visitors about the values of public lands.

But most of all, BLM byways are a means to let travelers get away from it all and see some of the little-known areas that make Oregon a unique and special place.

Your trek on the **Leslie Gulch-Succor Creek Byway** takes you through some of the most spectacular and rugged landscapes found in eastern Oregon. The country is enriched with unique geologic formations, wildlife and rare vegetation. It's cultural past is fascinating and recreational opportunities abound.

The byway passes through or near the Succor Creek State Recreation Area and the Leslie Gulch Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). This ACEC was designated for its outstanding scenery, unique vegetation, interesting wildlife, three wilderness study areas and the Mahogany Ridge Research Natural Area. Sweeping viewsheds include Owyhee Ridge, Three Fingers Rock, Mahogany Mountain, Lake Owyhee, and the distant Owyhee Mountains in Idaho.

Lands of contrast - The byway's most striking feature is the diverse, towering and colorful geology. Of igneous origin, the oldest exposed rocks formed about 15 million years ago. Much of this formation are sediments that came from distant volcanic eruptions. Succor Creek Canyon also has petrified wood and the agate-filled thunderegg, Oregon's state rock. The Leslie Gulch Tuff, part of this formation, is of local origin and unique within the Owyhee region.

Adaptive survival - On a summer day, the desert may appear void of animal life. Yet, the keen eye may see



POSTAGE AND FEES PAID
U.S. DEPARTMENT
OF THE INTERIOR
INT 415

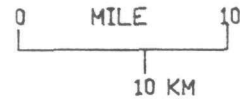
pronghorn antelope, mule deer, coyotes and, in Leslie Gulch, the elusive California bighorn sheep. From the sky, raptors search for their next meal. Chukar partridge and dove favor the canyons, while nightfall brings the silent flight of owls as they hunt rodents.

The talus slopes of the unique Leslie Gulch ash-flow tuff supports rare plant species. Two species are found only in the Leslie Gulch drainage, Packard's blazing star and Etter's grouse. A relic stand of Ponderosa pine in a nearby tributary is a reminder of a once cooler, wetter environment.

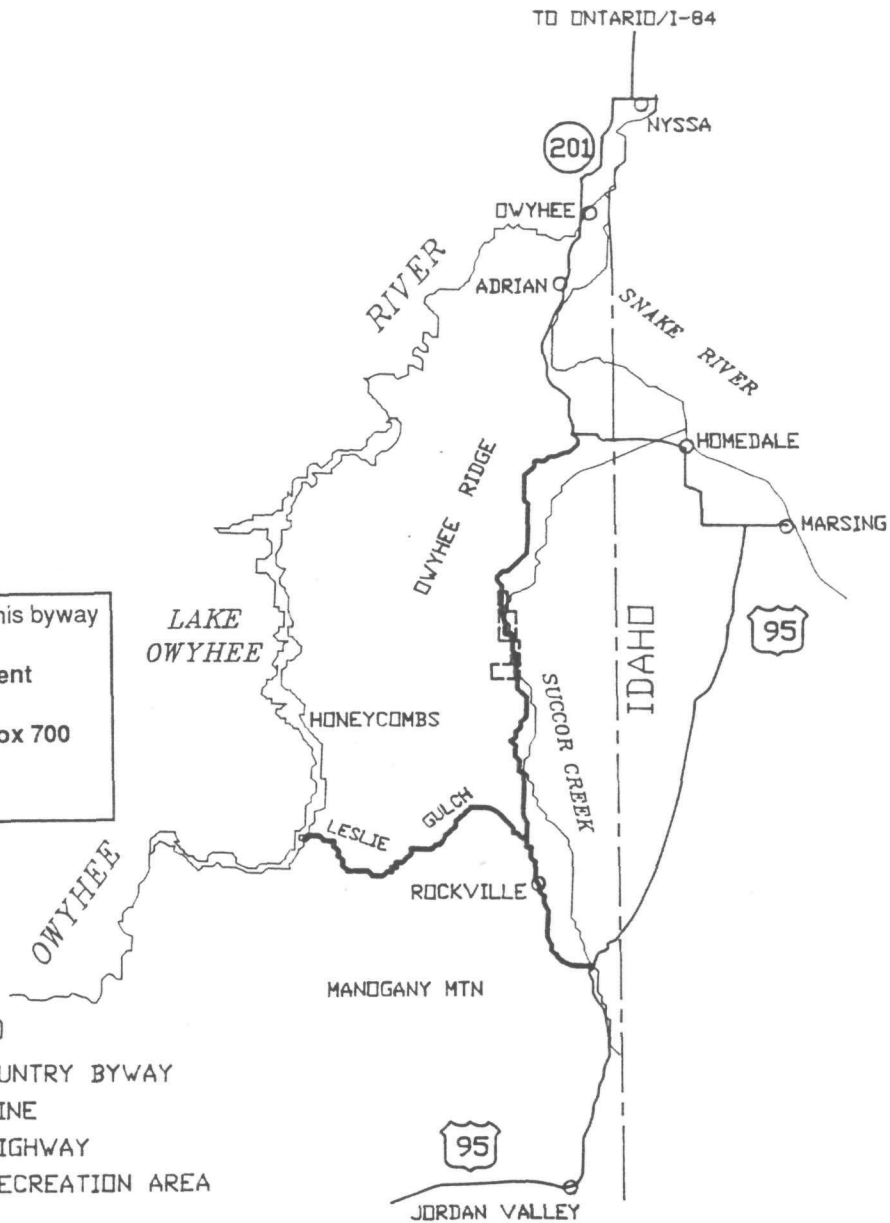
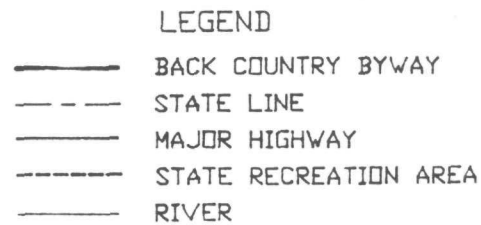
Human imprints - Native Americans long lived in harmony with this land. The Paiute Indians greeted, though not always welcomed, the early white settlers. Succor Creek Canyon's earliest homesteaders included the Willard and Ida Dutcher family. They watched as the Nyssa-Jordan Valley Market Road built through the canyon. Then they horse-pulled countless stranded cars out of the canyon.

The canyon long served as a wagon and mail route between Rockville and Watson, now under Lake Owyhee.

ACCESS - The 52-mile byway is located about 50 miles south of the Vale/Ontario area and about 50 miles west of the Nampa/Caldwell area. It consists of county and BLM graded dirt and graveled roads over terrain of 2,500 to 4,800 feet in elevation. While usually negotiable with a typical family vehicle, a high clearance two-wheel drive vehicle is recommended for more comfortable travel.



For further information about this byway contact the:
Bureau of Land Management
Vale District Office
100 Oregon Street, P.O. Box 700
Vale, Oregon 97918
(503) 473-3144



Pace yourself slowly for a safe and enjoyable journey. The roads are not maintained during the winter months. You should not travel the byway when snowy or wet. The better road conditions are normally from April through October, although heavy rains may occasionally make segments temporarily unpassable. Portions of the byway, particularly within Leslie Gulch and Succor Creek Canyon, are steep and narrow with occasional turnouts provided. Sustained narrow road grades of 11% in upper Leslie Gulch canyon strongly discourages the use of larger recreational vehicles and trailers.

- Enjoy your drive by remembering to:
- * "Top off" your vehicle's gas tank and radiator. Check your spare tire. Closest full services are in Nyssa, Homedale and Jordan Valley.
 - * Drive only on existing roads.
 - * Drive defensively. The winding road severely limits sight distance.
 - * Respect private property.
 - * Take plenty of drinking fluids. Summer temperatures quickly cause dehydration. Take warm clothing during colder weather.
 - * Camp only in designated locations at Succor Creek State Recreation Area and Leslie Gulch. Restrooms and drinking water are provided at Succor Creek.
 - * Check yourself for ticks after a hike. Ticks can cause Lyme Disease.
 - * Respect the natives, including rattlesnakes.