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## Grasslands & Open Prairies Common In Hugo Region

**Overview** Hugo, Oregon like most places has its Native American history, some known, most not. Hugo's first citizens or peoples were the Takelma Indians in the Rogue River Valley.<sup>1</sup>

**Native American's Use Of Fire**<sup>2</sup> Historical accounts document that the Takelma used fire for a variety of reasons resulting in many places in the Rogue Valley an expansive, grassy oak savanna. Written accounts by early settlers and fur trappers remain incomplete although many noted that there were open prairies with tall grasses in almost every river basin.

**1840s Applegate Trail Diarists**<sup>3</sup> Diarists note only three places they had to cut brush from Louse Creek to Grave Creek: Louse Creek, Jumpoff Joe Creek, and Grave Creek Hills. Therefore, the rest of the ground was open. Wagon Train Leader Levi Scott reported conditions in 1846 where emigrants had to cut brush and clear the *Trail*.

*“The second day after we crossed Rogue River, we came to a place where the road cutters had done nothing, and it was impossible for us to pass with the wagons. So the train was brought to a halt. I went forward, and after searching for a long time I found a place where we could pass by cutting through the thick bushes for about a furlong. The place where the horse trail passed was too rough, and could not easily be made passable for wagons. We went to work on the line I had blazed out, and cut our way through the woods, which brought us out near the Tetalum, or **Louse Creek**, as it is now called, by the realistic and unpoetical people who live along its banks.*

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## Diaries, Journals, & Reminiscences<sup>1</sup>

**Scott** (continued) *In two or three days after passing this place, we reached the **Jump-off-Jo**, where the road cutters had again done nothing, and we were compelled to stop and cut our way through to the open ground beyond, which occupied us for several hours, working all the available force of the company.*

*Three days from here we struck the head of a small branch running into **Grave Creek** which we followed down to its junction, through heavy timber and thick bushes. The road had been so poorly opened that the train was frequently compelled to stop and remove obstacles that ought to have been cleared away by the party in advance of us.”*



In 1846 diarist Virgil Pringle reported “Saturday, October 17 - road good and a good camp which is not common, the country being mostly burnt”.<sup>6</sup>

**1850s General Surveyor Office of Oregon**<sup>4</sup> Survey notes on prairies and open woodlands from the 1850

GLO surveys for the Hugo region are one of the most prevalent notes. These open areas were like popcorn on the string of the Applegate Trail.

**Serpentine Mountains & Prairies**<sup>5</sup> For the Hugo region between Louse Creek and Sexton summit there were additional reasons for the prairies and open woodlands (the popcorn areas) - the geology and soils. For example, there were three ultramafic rock mountains east of the Jacksonville Road.

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## Geology & Soils

They are clearly identified on Google Earth and aerial photos.

1. South Sexton Mountain
2. Red Mountain
3. Smaller Mountain at SW foot of Walker Mountain



Harris Creek and Schoolhouse Creek are examples of the prairies. The open seasonally wet meadow areas of Harris and Schoolhouse creeks have soils with similar characteristics. The ultramafic rock from which the soils developed is high in magnesium and very low in calcium, which limits effective rooting depth plant growth.<sup>5</sup>

**Want more information?** Contact an member of the HNAT.

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1. Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society. January 1, 2010. *Program Overview: Native Americans of Hugo, Oregon*. Hugo, OR.
  2. Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society. January 1, 2010. *Takelma Indians And Anthropogenic Fire*. Hugo, OR; Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society. January 1, 2010. *Native Americans, Including Takelma Indians And Fire*. Hugo, OR.
  3. Rose, Karen. 2006. Hugo Emigrant Trails Committee, Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society. *Hugo's Applegate Trail Diaries, Journals & Reminiscences Project*. "Yellow Book Project" For Participants of the Diaries, Journals and Reminiscences Sub-Committee. Hugo, OR. Hugo Neighborhood. 2005 *Diaries & Journals*. Brochure 11 in Emigrant Trail Series. Hugo, OR; Hugo Neighborhood. 2006 *Diaries, Journals & Reminiscences Sub-Committee*. Brochure 11B in Emigrant Trail Series. Hugo, OR.
  4. General Surveyor Office of Oregon. Subdivision Lines For 1856 Map (T.34., R. 6. W., Willamette Meridian). Field Notes. Surveyor Luke G Hyde. Contract February 19, 1855; Surveyed March 31, 1856; Hugo Neighborhood. 2006. *Hugo's Applegate Trail Field Notes*. Brochures 10A - 10D in Emigrant Trail Series. Hugo, OR.
  5. Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society, et al. June 2007. *Assessment Of Proposed Pioneer Meadows Subdivision Containing Applegate Trail Resources*. Sections IV.A - C. Hugo, OR. <http://jeffnet.org/~threepines/AP.htm>

## Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society's Mission

This information brochure is one of a series of documents published by the Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society (*Hugo Neighborhood*). It is designed to be shared with neighbors for the purpose of helping protect our rural quality of life by promoting an informed citizenry in decision-making. The *Hugo Neighborhood* is an informal nonprofit charitable and educational organization with a land use and history mission of promoting the social welfare of its neighbors.

### Land Use & History

The *Hugo Neighborhood's* land use mission is to promote Oregon Statewide Goal 1 — Citizen Involvement, and to preserve, protect, and enhance the livability and economic viability of its farms, forests, and rural neighbors. It will act, if requested, as a technical resource assisting neighbors to represent themselves.

Its history mission is to educate, collect, preserve, interpret, and research its local history and to encourage public interest in the history of the Hugo area.

Volunteer membership dues are \$10.00 annually per family and normally used for paper, ink, envelopes, publications and mailings. Send us your e-mail address if you want to know what we are doing.

Email: [hugo@jeffnet.org](mailto:hugo@jeffnet.org)

Web Page: <http://www.hugoneighborhood.org/>

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## Prairies and Open Woodlands along Applegate Trail



Brochure NA-15C Of Hugo's  
Native American Brochure Series



*Oak Trees:*  
*East Manzanita I-5 Rest Area*

January 3, 2010  
Updated September 12, 2011

Hugo Neighborhood Association &  
Historical Society  
Josephine County Historical Society