



BLACK ROCK DESERT
HIGH ROCK CANYON
EMIGRANT TRAILS



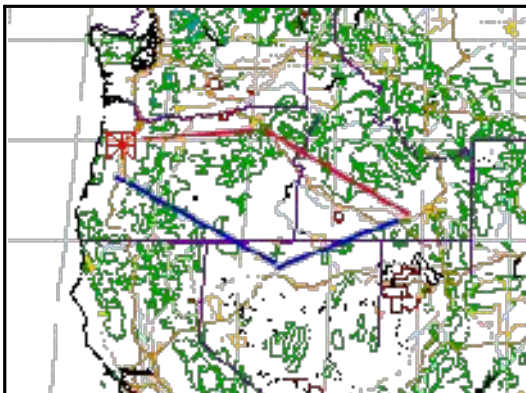
NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA

Applegate-Lassen Trail

- The Applegate-Lassen trail is the West's best preserved 19th century trail. Nearly all of the 145-mile stretch of trail between Imlay, Nevada and California's Surprise Valley is still visible.
- The Applegate trail was blazed in 1846 when Jesse and Lindsay Applegate headed south from Willamette Valley, Oregon on June 29.
- They were looking for a less hazardous route to that region from the east. They had lost family members on the Oregon Trail when their family had to cross the Snake River.
- On July 21, 1846, they came to a large meadow on the Humboldt River, what is now the near by Rye Patch Reservoir. This was the beginning of the Applegate Trail.
- During the remainder of this year, and for the next two years, emigrants successfully traveled this trail bound for Oregon.
- In 1848, Peter Lassen, hoping to bring emigrants to his ranch, acted as a guide to a party of ten to 12 wagons bound for California. He followed a route from the start of the Applegate Trail to Goose Lake (near Lakeview, Oregon) where he turned southward over terrain that was barely passable.
- Many '49ers took this trail, because they thought it was a shortcut.
- The emigrants suffered great hardships; many lives and livestock were lost. It became known as the "Death Route".
- The trail's Black Rock Desert stretch was one of the deadliest along the entire overland route because of its heat and lack of water.



www.offroadexperience.com



The red line on this map represents the Oregon Trail. The blue line on this map represents the Applegate Trail and the light blue line on this map represents the Lassen cut-off.

- The hardships of crossing the 40-mile waterless Black Rock Desert coupled with the extended mileage (200 miles) required to reach their destination added to the miseries of the emigrants.
- The death of the livestock on the desert and the additional time needed to cross it decimated their food supply which created a more hazardous journey and probably influenced the mortality rate.
- The Lassen cut off of the route fell into disuse after 1849 when the Noble's route was discovered.

