

HIGH DESERT VOICES

April 2016

News and Information published by and for Volunteers

Curating a Temporary Exhibit

by Heather Duchow, Newsletter Writer



Temporary exhibits at the High Desert Museum seem to appear almost by magic. Doors close, banging noises come out of a gallery, and a short time later a new temporary exhibit opens. Or so it seems to me. The opening of the *Rain, Snow or Shine* exhibit, with its interactive displays and vintage weather instruments, piqued my curiosity about the curation process. When I ran into Curator of Western History, Laura Ferguson, at a furniture resale shop where she was on an errand relating to the upcoming *Art for a Nation: Inspiration from the Great Depression* exhibit, I knew I had to find out more about temporary exhibits at the Museum.

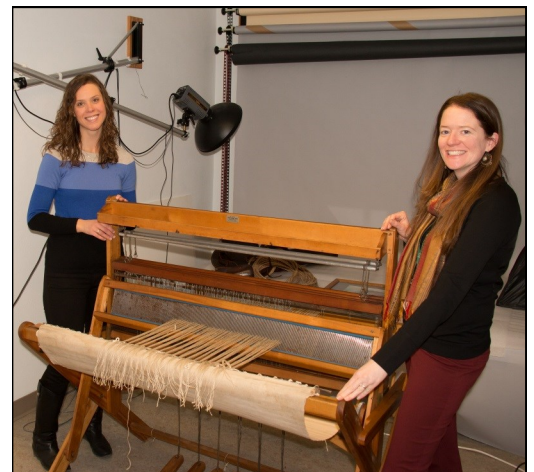
The process begins with a master plan for temporary exhibits. A group of eight people is responsible for the plan. They look ahead at least a year with a fairly firm schedule for exhibits, and they work to create a three to five year advanced schedule.

Once a schedule is set, exhibits are assigned, and responsibility for each exhibit is handed off to an individual curator and the exhibitions team. A weather exhibit (the current *Rain, Snow or Shine* exhibit) was assigned to

Curator of Education, Carolyn Nesbitt, in the fall of 2014. She says it takes about a year to curate an exhibit such as *Rain, Snow or Shine*. Work on the exhibit began with brainstorming sessions about what to include and how it would tie into the mission of the Museum. The curator works with Exhibit Designer, Robert Flood, who is responsible for all aspects of the exhibit design including logo, floor plan, and even paint color for the gallery walls. Robert's input is essential for planning all parts of the exhibit. He has a good knowledge of what Exhibits Preparator, Dustin Cockerham, can build in the Museum's shop: interactive displays, artifact display cases, and components of immersive displays. Robert also designs most of the graphics and information panels. For the *Rain, Snow or Shine* exhibit, Carolyn met with Robert weekly.

When a curator wants artifacts for display or props for an immersive display, how does she find them? Where the artifacts come from depends partly on the focus of the exhibit and how well it meshes with the Museum collection. Need an antique John Deere plow? The Museum has that. Want vintage weather instruments? Those are not in the Museum's collection. So where do they come from? Some artifacts and props are purchased, like the table Laura was picking up when I ran into her. However, many artifacts are borrowed from other museums or private collections. The most common way of finding artifacts is networking with other museums, although online research, and frequenting the right flea markets can also yield results. For *Rain, Snow or Shine*, Carolyn contacted the Oregon Department of Forestry's Forest History Center in Salem looking for vintage weather instruments. Her search for fulgurites lead her to contact the Rice Northwest Museum of Rocks and Minerals in Hillsboro, OR.

Once artifacts or props are on hand, Collections volunteers assess the condition of the items and provide a report to the curator. They also help prepare items for exhibits, such as a rug that needed extensive cleaning before it could be used in an immersive scene for *Art for a Nation*. Curators often arrange immersive scenes ahead of time to make sure the spacing is right. The arrangement of items in display cases also needs to be planned. Dustin designs and builds most mounts used to display artifacts.





Photos by Heather Duchow

Graphic and informational panels are often printed in-house and sometimes inserted into stands or supports that either belong to the Museum or are rented from a museum supply company. Manufacture of some of the more durable signage is contracted out.

The final stage of mounting an exhibit is installation. Each exhibit space has its own timetable for changing out exhibits. For open space like the Collins Gallery (currently home to *Sage Grouse: Icon of the Sagebrush Sea*) turnover time is limited to five business days, and installation must be done after hours. In contrast, installation behind closed doors is more flexible.

Because volunteers don't help with exhibit installation, each newly opened exhibit is a revelation. The next time I visit an exhibit at the Museum, I will enjoy it for the art or the historical or scientific information it presents, but I will take the time to notice the way artifacts are displayed and the design aspects of the exhibit. I have a new appreciation for the planning and legwork that go into temporary exhibits curated at the Museum.

High Desert Museum Area Updates from March 2016

by Siobhan Sullivan, Newsletter Editor

By Hand Through Memory – At the recent Free Day, several visitors noticed that the 1950's era TV was no longer in the exhibit area. It finally “gave up the ghost”. There was a short discussion about possibly replacing it.

Five team members went to the ceremony welcoming eagles at the Round Butte Overlook. This event takes place rain or shine and includes ceremonial dancing. It was an interesting event and volunteers were encouraged to go next February.

Naturalists – Everything is going smoothly. One volunteer is returning, another is phasing out, and another is in a “floating” position. One of their members will be joining the Desertarium team.

Collections – Staff members have been working on putting up 5,544 buttons as part of the *Art for a Nation: Inspiration from the Great Depression* exhibit. There are concerns that some of them may disappear during the upcoming Kids Day.

Collections has been putting together artifacts from the 1930's for the *Art for a Nation* exhibit in the SOW Gallery. Paintings for the walls have been loaned to the Museum. Timberline Lodge is loaning a complete bedroom set to be used in the exhibit.

The tower of blankets will be constructed on the weekend of March 19 and 20.

A stolen linchpin that held on a wheel in the Oregon Trail display area was recently replaced with one that fits more snugly.

Photography - They may have one new volunteer soon and are happy to welcome additional volunteers. If people have exceptional shots or images of interesting interactions at the Museum, they would be happy to consider them.

Mammals - The team needs one more volunteer for mammal talks. The team hopes they receive training on the otters prior to the new exhibit opening in May.

Birds of Prey - They have a full team at this time. The interns will be starting pretty soon.

A ferruginous hawk has been moved into the area formerly used by the porcupines.

A practice session of the Sky Hunters presentation took place at lunchtime on March 16.

Living History - Interpreters will be working at the Miller Ranch during Spring Break. There will be several training sessions for adult and teen volunteers that will be working at the Museum over the next few months. There was a training session on March 17 at 9:30 am.

The Ranch is working on extending the horse pasture area and repairing holes in the willow fence.

High Desert Voices Newsletter - They have added a new writer, Adair Sullivan, to the team.

Ranger Station - The station will be open July 1 – Labor Day. In the past, they relied upon 10-12 volunteers that worked an average of six to seven total days over the course of the season. They have recently experienced attrition due to death, Alzheimer's disease, and other causes. They are looking for additional volunteers that would be willing to help tell the story of the US Forest Service. If potential volunteers have an interest, they will go through a day of training. Scheduling of work days is flexible.

Introducing Erika Erkel, Development Associate of Corporate Relations

by Dave Gilbert, Newsletter Writer



Just short of 30 years old, the woman who handles corporate relations for the High Desert Museum has covered a lot of ground. She's lived in California, Arizona, and Oregon, as well as Italy and Australia. Twice she's called Bend her home, and this is where she wants to stay.

She's Erika Erkel. Her last name rhymes with bell.

Erika began life in San Jose, CA in 1986. She entered a family with two half-brothers, Tim and Marcus, her dad, Matt, and her mother, Karen, who is a highly-regarded expert in hospital pharmacy operations.

Before she was born, her father sustained a serious lower back injury at work, "which is why he was a stay-at-home parent and why we became so close," Erika says. "He's my best friend."

So the family followed to where her mother worked.

Erika was just a toddler when they moved to Tucson, AZ. There, she learned to love the outdoors, she says, "playing in the desert." In 1993, the family moved to Lakeview,

OR for a year, spending the first month on a ranch where "I learned to be a cowgirl."

Erika remembers fondly her mother's 16-hand quarter horse named Rasta. Her frequent laughter rings as she explains that the horse's name was because his muddy mane was reminiscent of Rastafarian dreadlocks.

After a year, the family followed Karen's job opportunities back to Arizona, where they lived near Cottonwood for the next five years.

Growing up Erika was active in school sports. Early on it was peewee cheerleading and T-ball, then came softball, swimming, soccer, and basketball.

When Karen's work brought the family to Bend in 2001, Erika was a sophomore at Mountain View High School. At first she was unhappy about leaving her old high school, she says, "but I learned to fall in love with Bend. I consider it my home town." She also added skiing to her mix of activities.

She becomes animated. "Senior year was a blast." She laughs. "Go Cougars!"

She had plenty of chances to say that as a cheerleader. She also played varsity softball and other sports.

Erika's plan was to go to the University of Arizona in Tucson, but instead, she enrolled in Central Oregon Community College and spent her first semester in Florence, Italy.

"It was fabulous," she says. Her schedule was "pretty sweet": three days in classes, then four days exploring. "The history...the culture...and the people were great."

She returned to Bend to complete her two-year college degree. On a trip to Hawaii she found another interest: flying. So when she returned to COCC, Erika took courses toward a pilot's license.

After graduation she went to Australia where she had family. She spent about six weeks on a cattle ranch in South Australia and more time on a vineyard near Perth. She also spent time in New Zealand.

When she returned to the United States, Erika's interest in aviation led her to enroll in Embry Riddle Aeronautical University in Prescott, AZ.

"I was debating what direction I should take," she says. She decided to complete her college education at California State University-Chico, studying business marketing. She also volunteered at non-profits, including St. Jude's Up 'til Dawn and the Make-a-Wish Foundation.

Erika graduated in 2010 and worked briefly for C-3 Events, a Bend company that specializes in event promotion, and a place called Diageo in Los Angeles.

"But a Bend girl does not fit in L.A.," she says, laughing. So she gave a shot at life in Scottsdale, AZ where one of her brothers lived. She worked in event planning and promotion at two private country clubs. When her brother moved, she found life in Scottsdale a "dead end."

In 2015, when C-3 offered her a summer job, she returned to Bend. "That gave me a base for looking around," she says. She interviewed for a job at the High Desert Museum, but it didn't work out that time.

Erika has always loved animals of all kinds. "I was always bringing home hurt critters or strays," she says.

Now she's down to one. She flashes a picture of a 9-year-old French bulldog she calls her "fur-baby." She spends her leisure time hiking and paddle-boarding. She still volunteers with Make-a-Wish and is back into private pilot training.

After doing wedding planning and event coordinating for Pronghorn, she received a call inviting her to try again at the Museum. She took her current job in December: Development Associate for Corporate Relations.

"I'm thrilled to be here," she says. "Yes, I love it."

Central Oregon Attractions - Thomas Condon Paleontology Center

by Siobhan Sullivan, Newsletter Editor



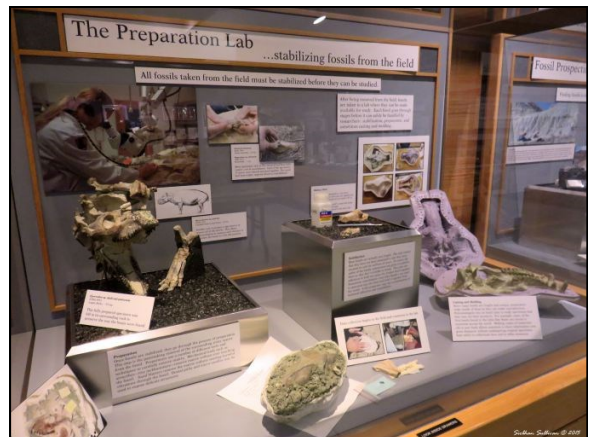
If you drive just a couple of hours east of Bend you will find strikingly painted hills and a center devoted to paleontology. The Thomas Condon Paleontology Center will impress you with fascinating information and artfully displayed artifacts. Wow! What a place.

In 1862 minister and self-trained scientist, Thomas Condon, learned there were fossils in the John Day basin from soldiers stationed in the area. He began excavating fossils in 1865 and sent specimens to the east coast for verification. There was a great amount of interest in the specimens he uncovered. He was later appointed to be Oregon's first state geologist due to his many discoveries.

Fossil collectors collected as much as they could as fast as they could for many years. In the late 1800's, John C. Merriam, professor of geology at the University of California, developed a new practice when collecting specimens. Detailed notes were taken about the layer of rock strata a specimen was collected in. Merriam, along with Ralph W. Chaney and Chester Stock, led the way in correlating the fossils found in each layer with the geological age of the strata.

As early as 1903, concerns were voiced over the preservation of the fossil beds. Concerned citizens wanted the area to be designated as a state park. They later pushed for the protection that national park status would provide. In 1975 the area was designated as the John Day National Monument. In 1984 Ted Fremd was hired as the Monument's first paleontologist. He developed a program of systematic prospecting, mapping of geology, and radiometric dating of the rock layers. Scientists in a wide variety of fields were employed in helping to understand the flora, fauna, and geology of the region.

The Thomas Condon Paleontology Center was built in 2003 and houses fossils found in the three units of the John Day Fossil Beds National Monument and areas nearby. It is located



in the Sheep Rock Unit near Dayville. Visitors can get a good view of scientists carefully cleaning fossils found in the field as they work in a lab with large viewing windows. Scientists have found 2,200 species of plants and animals in the lands of this national monument. The Center displays fossils in glass cases and large murals with re-creations of what scenes may have looked like when those animals and plants existed. A small store with fossil and dinosaur-related products is located in the lobby.

The Monument covers 14,000 acres in its three units. The units are many miles apart and services are limited so plan in advance. There are several trails in the John Day Fossil Beds National Monument to give you a close-up view of the landscape. Since this is a national monument, collecting fossils is not allowed.

Digging for fossils is allowed on the hill located just behind Fossil High School in the town of Fossil. I have collected fossils at that location and the site is easily accessible. For more information on collecting fossils there, go

to <http://www.oregonpaleolandscenter.com/#!wheeler-high-school-fossil-beds/c17uw> .

To find out more about the Thomas Condon Paleontology Center, go to <http://www.nps.gov/joda/learn/photosmultimedia/Thomas-Condon-Paleontology-Center.htm> .

Oregon Public Broadcasting recently aired a program entitled, *Thomas Condon: Of Faith and Fossils*. That video can be accessed here: <http://watch.opb.org/video/2365673296> .

Photos by Siobhan Sullivan

Oregon's Adopt-a-Lek Program – A Greater Sage-grouse Conservation Volunteer Program

by Kelly Hazen, Newsletter Writer



Ever wonder how Oregon state biologists are able to study greater sage-grouse in the vast sagebrush grasslands of the high desert? The scientific name for greater sage-grouse is *Centrocercus urophasianus* which means pointed tail pheasant. Even though greater sage-grouse are the largest grouse in North America, they can be very difficult to locate in their remote and rugged sagebrush habitat.

One place to find the grouse is on their spring communal breeding grounds called leks. What the heck is a lek? Leks are open areas with bare soil and short grass surrounded by sagebrush nesting habitat. Male greater sage-grouse gather in leks to display their physical fitness to attract and mate with females. The larger males launch into their elaborate display

and dance for about an hour at dawn and dusk from February to April. The smaller female greater sage-grouse tour the lek display arena looking for the fittest male who occupies the center of the lek. These grouse return to the same lek location year after year.

To assist Oregon state biologists with their sage-grouse lek studies, the Adopt-a-Lek program was initiated in 2007. This program is designed to increase the number of leks that can be studied by state biologists during the short spring breeding season. The Adopt-a-Lek program is made up of a dedicated group of volunteer citizen-scientists who count the number of greater sage-grouse observed on the leks. These leks are located in remote southern Malheur County. This area of



Malheur County has undisturbed sagebrush habitat that is essential to greater sage-grouse. The Adopt-a-Lek volunteers must traverse rugged roads to establish isolated primitive campsites with no cell phone coverage and limited weather information. Each volunteer is trained in the lek counting protocol and procedures. They possess excellent map reading/GPS skills and a passion for adventure and solitude. The typical day for a volunteer involves rising before sunrise in order to arrive at a remote observation site that is



several hundred yards from the lek. There they stand for about one hour and use a spotting scope to count the grouse and take notes on behavior. Greater sage-grouse are highly sensitive to disturbance at lek sites. Frequent human activity near lek sites has been shown to cause greater sage-grouse to decrease breeding activity and even abandon leks. That is why Adopt-a-Lek volunteers are trained to count leks from distant observation points to minimize disturbance. The program is not an opportunity to photograph greater sage-grouse, volunteers do not disturb the grouse, and they do not share the lek locations with greater sage-grouse, but a lek count of zero is very important to the greater sage-grouse conservation effort.





Fortunately, these grouse usually return to the same lek location year after year. However, lek use and locations can change, so the volunteers also survey during the mid-day for new lek sites. These long term count and observation data are used by wildlife managers to evaluate the current breeding population, measure population trends, and is the basis for making annual minimum population estimates. If you, or anyone you know, enjoy spending time in the solitude of the high desert and would like to join the spring 2017 Adopt-a-Lek volunteer citizen scientist group, please email adopt.a.lek@gmail.com.

Here is the link to view a live web-cam of male greater sage-grouse displaying on a central Oregon lek. Remember to watch at dawn and dusk beginning March 25, 2016:

<http://www.nature.org/ourinitiatives/regions/northamerica/unitedstates/oregon/our-priorities/sage-grouse-lek-cam.xml>.

Photos by Charlotte Ganskopp, Kelly Hazen, Amber Schenk, John Williams, and Pete Zimowsky



Illustration of a male greater sage-grouse tail feather from the US Fish and Wildlife Service's [Beginner's Guide to Greater Sage-grouse](#)

Kudos Korner

by Siobhan Sullivan, Newsletter Editor

Several staff and volunteers were thanked for their work in March. **Steve Magidson** was thanked for filling in for Frank last month at the VAC meeting. **Frank Graham** commented on his ears burning after reading the Kudos last month. He appreciated all the collegiality and how much good all the volunteers do for the institution. He noted that he refers to the place as “my Museum” when conversing with people and hoped all of us thought of it the same way. **Steve Magidson** said that the reactions he receives when he is wearing his badge or Museum garb are “unbelievable.” He had never seen such a positive response for work at any other institution. Appreciation was extended to all volunteers and staff associated with the Museum. **Staff** were thanked for all of their work putting up the colorful button wall display. **Muriel and Gail Carbiener** were also congratulated for being featured in a beautiful article about protecting the Oregon Trail in *High Country News* magazine. **Les Joslin** was recognized for being the author of a recently published book on Bend history. Les was featured at Paulina Springs Bookstore in Sisters on March 18 discussing his book, *Legendary Locals of Bend*. Kudos to all of you!

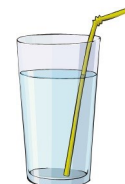


Volunteer Appreciation BBQ



April 5th from 4:30-6:30 pm

Food and Beverages Provided



If you are a “newish” volunteer and haven’t yet been photographed for the “Wall of Fame,” please come between 4 and 4:30 that day. Portrait photographer extraordinaire, Todd Cary, will be here to take your head shots!

Sky Hunters Played to a Packed House During Spring Break!



High Desert Voices

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2016



2016

Kitchen Patrol: Paid Staff

April	May - continued
2 Thorn Hollow String Band. 11:00 am - 2:00 pm.	10 Off-site Event: <i>Plowing up the Past: How Does the Legacy of Agricultural Land Use Influence High Desert Ecosystems Today?</i> McMenamins. Doors open at 5:30 pm. Program starts at 7:00 pm. RSVP.
5 Birding for Breakfast. 8:00 - 10:00 am. Members \$10, Non-members \$15. RSVP.	11 Senior Day. Free admission for everyone 65 and older.
5 Volunteer BBQ. Barbecued food & buffet provided. 4:30 - 6:30 pm.	11 Off-site Event: <i>Know 1930's: Will Work for Food.</i> Deschutes Public Library, Downtown Bend. 6:00 pm.
9 Off-Site Field Trip: <i>Oregon's Wild Horses.</i> 8:00 am - 3:00 pm. Members \$10, Non-members \$20. Registration & pre-payment required.	13, 14 Off-site Event: <i>Know 1930's: The Old Town is Changed Today - A Journey into a Bend You Never Knew.</i> Deschutes Public Library. Redmond on 13th and Bend on 14th. 2:00 pm.
12 Natural History Pub: <i>The Carnivore Way.</i> McMenamins. Doors open at 5:30 pm. Program starts at 7:00 pm. RSVP.	13 Off-site Event: <i>Celebrate the 1930's: Fashion, Dance, and Music.</i> Tower Theater, Bend. 7:00 pm. \$15 + \$2 theatre restoration fee. More info at towertheatre.org .
15 Exclusive Member's Exhibit Opening: <i>Art for a Nation: Inspiration from the Great Depression.</i> 6:00 - 8:00 pm. Members free, guests \$7. No-host bar. RSVP.	17, 24 Off-site Event: <i>Know 1930's: Prohibition and Distilling.</i> Deschutes Public Library. Bend on 17th and Redmond on 24th. 6:00 pm.
16 Exhibit Opening: <i>Art for a Nation: Inspiration from the Great Depression.</i>	18, 25 Off-site Event: <i>Know 1930's: The Great Depression in Bend.</i> Deschutes Public Library. Sisters on 18th at 12:00 pm and Bend on 25th at 6:00 pm.
16 Off-Site Field Trip: <i>Swainson's and Squirrels.</i> 7:00 am - 2:00 pm. Members \$10, Non-members \$20. Registration & pre-payment required.	18 Off-site Event: <i>Know 1930's: Art of the WPA.</i> Deschutes Public Library, Sunriver. 12:00 pm.
23 Exclusive Member's Exhibit Preview: <i>Autzen Otter Exhibit.</i> 8:00 - 10:00 am. Members free, guests \$7. RSVP.	19, 20 Off-site Event: <i>Know 1930's: Timberline Lodge - A New Deal Masterpiece.</i> Deschutes Public Library. East Bend on 19th at 6:00 pm and La Pine on 20th at 12:00 pm.
26 Museum & Me. 4:00 - 7:00 pm. Free. RSVP.	20 Open 'til Dark. 6:00 - 9:00 pm. No-host bar. Members \$3, Non-members \$7. RSVP.
29 Exhibit Opening: <i>Kids Curate.</i>	21 Exhibit Opening: <i>Autzen Otter Exhibit.</i>
May - Save the Date!	
1 Summer Hours Begin. 9:00 am - 5:00 pm.	28 Summer Programming Begins.
2 Off-site Event: <i>Know 1930's: Woody Guthrie Tribute by Sisters Americana Students.</i> Deschutes Public Library, Downtown Bend. 6:00 pm.	To RSVP: www.highdesertmuseum.org/rsvp or 541-382-4754 ext.
7 Thorn Hollow String Band. 11:00 am - 2:00 pm.	To pre-register: www.highdesertmuseum.org/program
7 Weekend Workshop: <i>Art Studio.</i> 10:30 am - 12:00 pm. Paired pricing for one adult & one child. Members \$10, Non-members \$20. Each additional participant \$5. Registration & pre-payment required.	
7 Weekend Workshop: <i>Museum & Me Art Studio.</i> 2:00 - 4:00 pm. Free. Registration required.	