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EZRA MEEKER LOOP



Coordinates

Trailhead:

N 43°32.529'
W 116°06.571'

**Boise River Diver-
sion Dam and canyon
overlook:**

N 43°32.307'
W 116°05.814'

Distance: 1.4-mile loop or 1.6-mile loop

Total Elevation Gain: 50 feet or 150 feet

Difficulty: Easy

Time: 0.5 to 1 hour

Season: All year

Shade: Minimal

Leash Requirements: Off leash

Water Availability: None

Cautionary “Tails”: The upper portions of the trail can be muddy during the wet seasons.

Restrooms: Yes

Dog Waste Stations: Yes, at trailhead

Information: [adacounty.id.gov/
parksandwaterways/open-space-and-trails](http://adacounty.id.gov/parksandwaterways/open-space-and-trails)

EZRA MEEKER LOOP

This short loop is part of the Oregon Trail Recreation Area managed by Ada County Parks and Waterways. There are over 4.5 miles of trails, including the Historic Oregon Trail. Actual wagon ruts from the 1800s are still visible on portions of the trail! These trails don't see as much use as other trails in the Boise Foothills and make for an excellent opportunity to enjoy a quick hike or a trip down history lane. There is an interpretive kiosk shaped like a covered wagon and educational signs along the trail.

Ezra Meeker originally traveled the Oregon Trail in 1852 and settled in Washington state. In 1906, when he was 75 years old, he headed east on a journey to retrace the original trail. Along the way, he started placing markers. He was afraid the pioneers' trail and history would be forgotten. Along his way, he gathered support and funds from local communities. Eventually, he ended up in Washington, D.C., where Theodore Roosevelt pledged support to keep the pioneers who traveled along the route and their achievements alive. Meeker went on to accurately map the trail and become the first president of the Oregon Trail

Memorial Association. He was a true pioneer and preservationist, and thanks to him, we have unique places like this where a glimpse of history is preserved.

Your four-legged friend might wish they were leading the wagon train west and herding cattle for hundreds of miles, but they will have to settle for a quick spin around the sagebrush-dotted plateau. The terrain is mainly flat and open, making it easy to keep an eye on dogs. When the sagebrush is in bloom from late summer to fall, it can be aromatic and might have your four-legged friend's sniffer going on overdrive.

The vantage points make this an excellent hike during fall, winter, and spring. In the fall, the changing color palette of the trees in the valley pops with oranges, yellows, and reds. The mountains above the valley are snow-capped in the winter, and the sunshine on a cold winter day is welcoming. Watch nature come alive in the spring as the Boise River fills and the valley's trees turn a vibrant green to liven up the hike.

DRIVING DIRECTIONS

Take I-84 east to Idaho City/Highway 21 (exit 57) in Boise. Reset your trip-meter. Turn left onto Gowen Road/Highway 21 north. At 2.5 miles, turn right to the entrance of the Oregon Trail Recreation Area. Drive 0.2 mile to the interpretive kiosk shaped like a covered wagon; the signed trailhead is on the south side of the kiosk.

THE HIKE

There is no clear advantage regarding which direction you hike the loop. This hike description goes counterclockwise. It's hard to get lost, but the trail signage is not very good, so paying attention to where you are going is necessary. Ada County is making improvements to the area, so new trail markers might be installed.

From the south side of the covered wagon kiosk (restrooms are on the north side) head east, come to a fork in the trail, go right, and quickly come to a junction with the Sara Sutton trail. Turn left, continuing east. In the spring, the yellows and whites of wild mustard, yarrow, and fiddleneck dot the green grass landscape.



Watson loving the fall hike



View of Diversion Dam and Boise River Canyon

At 0.4 mile, come to a junction with the Oregon Trail. (To extend the hike, skip to the last paragraph.) Continue straight on the level terrain and pass an intersection with the Kelton Freight Trail. With your faithful four-legged friend by your side, imagine traveling these routes as the pioneers did and what an effort it was to make the journey to the west.

At 0.7 mile, reach a junction and go left to parallel the rim of the plateau. It is worth a short detour here to turn right and visit the base of the cliffs for fabulous views of Diversion Dam, the Boise River, and the canyon.

Continuing above the rim, enjoy the pleasant views of the valley and surrounding hills. If your four-legged friend doesn't find and point out the Oregon trail markers, keep an eye out for them. At 1.4 miles, reach the covered wagon kiosk to end the hike.

To extend the hike at the junction with the Oregon Trail at 0.4 mile, go right and climb 70 feet in 0.1 mile. Reach another junction, turn left, then at 0.7 mile continue straight at the intersection on the Joe Palmer connector (if you go right in 0.6 mile, it ends on E Columbia Road). At 0.8 mile turn left on Joe Palmer Trail at the junction. Descend 70 feet to the bottom of the hill, then take a faint trail to the right for fabulous views of Diversion Dam, the Boise River, and the canyon. Trace your steps back to Joe Palmer Trail and continue straight, quickly connecting back into the Ezra Meeker loop and adding 0.2 mile and a little elevation to the hike.