

TOUR HELVETIA

SOUTH



Presented by Helvetia Community Association
www.HelvetiaCommunity.org

A 501(c)(3) cultural, educational, non-profit organization

INTRODUCTION TO HELVETIA

In addition to their picturesque beauty, the hills of Helvetia and the Tualatin Mountains perform essential environmental functions. They shed rain to local stream headwaters and the aquifer below, which feeds the valley floor farmland as well as wildlife habitat. This hydrology supports vast dryland farming and smaller irrigated farming, and contributes to the highest classification soils remaining in Washington County, right here in Helvetia. As headwaters feed larger streams and rivers, Helvetia is also one of the important sources of clean water for fish habitat in our Tualatin Valley.

Helvetia's cultural heritage embraces the pre-settlement Tualatin (Twalaty or Atfalati) tribe, that occupied and cared for the land prior to settlement by people of mostly European descent. Treaties have included the Tualatins as part of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde. When German-Swiss farmers immigrated to the Helvetia area over 150 years ago, they saw a striking resemblance to their native Switzerland in the fertile soils and rolling hills of the Tualatin Mountains. They named the area "Helvetia", Latin for "Switzerland" -- a name that is still found on Swiss postage stamps and coins.

The farmhouses, churches and barns they constructed in the 19th century can still be seen throughout Helvetia, meticulously maintained and in continual use for more than 100 years.

- **Finding Helvetia**
 - The Helvetia area lies on the north side of the Sunset Highway (US-26) between Cornelius Pass and Jackson School Roads.
 - Take Exit 61, Brookwood Parkway/Helvetia Road, about 10 miles west of Portland, Oregon.
 - Head north, take the first right turn onto Jacobson Road, and right again onto Casper Place to begin your journey at the Historic Marker of Five Oaks, Historic Meeting Place.

● **Five Oaks, Historic Meeting Place**
N 45° 33.850' W 122° 55.368"
At the present corner of NW Casper Place & NW Clara Lane

There once were five grand Oregon white oaks standing here. They were thought to be 500 years old when, one at a time, some perished from storm damage between 1948 and 1962. Four young Oregon white oak trees were planted in 1999 to commemorate the old giants that fell.

For hundreds of years, this place has been known as Five Oaks. It was used as a meeting place and resting place for indigenous people, followed by mountain men fur trappers as early as 1830. Pioneers Alexander and Sarah Zachary arrived by wagon train in 1843 and claimed this spot in their Donation Land Claim. In later decades, settlers held horse races, religious revivals, and court sessions under these historic trees.

Along Groveland Drive...

● **Oregon White Oak Trees**

Note the Oregon white oak trees that line the road. Less than 1% of the historic Willamette Valley native oak habitat still exists so we are especially fortunate that over 3,000 of these important species remain in the Helvetia area, some as old as 500 years. The Tualatin tribe used the Oregon white oaks as shelter and as a food source, creating a mush of their acorns. They patiently nurtured the Oregon white oak trees because it can take as long as 75 years to get the first acorn harvest.



Throughout Helvetia, you can see majestic Swiss Linden trees wherever there was a Swiss German family homestead. Local lore has it that twelve Linden saplings were brought from Switzerland in 1892. The local midwife, Marie Nussbaumer, used the leaves for medicinal purposes and Linden tea is still made from the leaves of these gentle giants by Swiss descendants. You can see a Swiss Linden tree between the home and automotive shop at the corner of Groveland Drive and Groveland Road.



● **Swiss Linden Trees**



The Rice Museum is the finest rock and minerals museum in the Pacific Northwest. An affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution, it contains the largest opal-filled thunder egg in the world, crystallized gold bigger than a hand, dinosaur eggs and fossils and an extensive meteorite collection, among other attractions. The museum facility, the Richard and Helen Rice Residence, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It is recognized for its unique mid-century architectural style, as well as its use of natural stone on the interior and exterior, and the extraordinary woodwork throughout, all of native Oregon woods.

● **Rice Northwest Museum of Rocks and Minerals**
503.647.2418
ricenorthwestmuseum.org

Along Groveland Drive and Groveland Road...

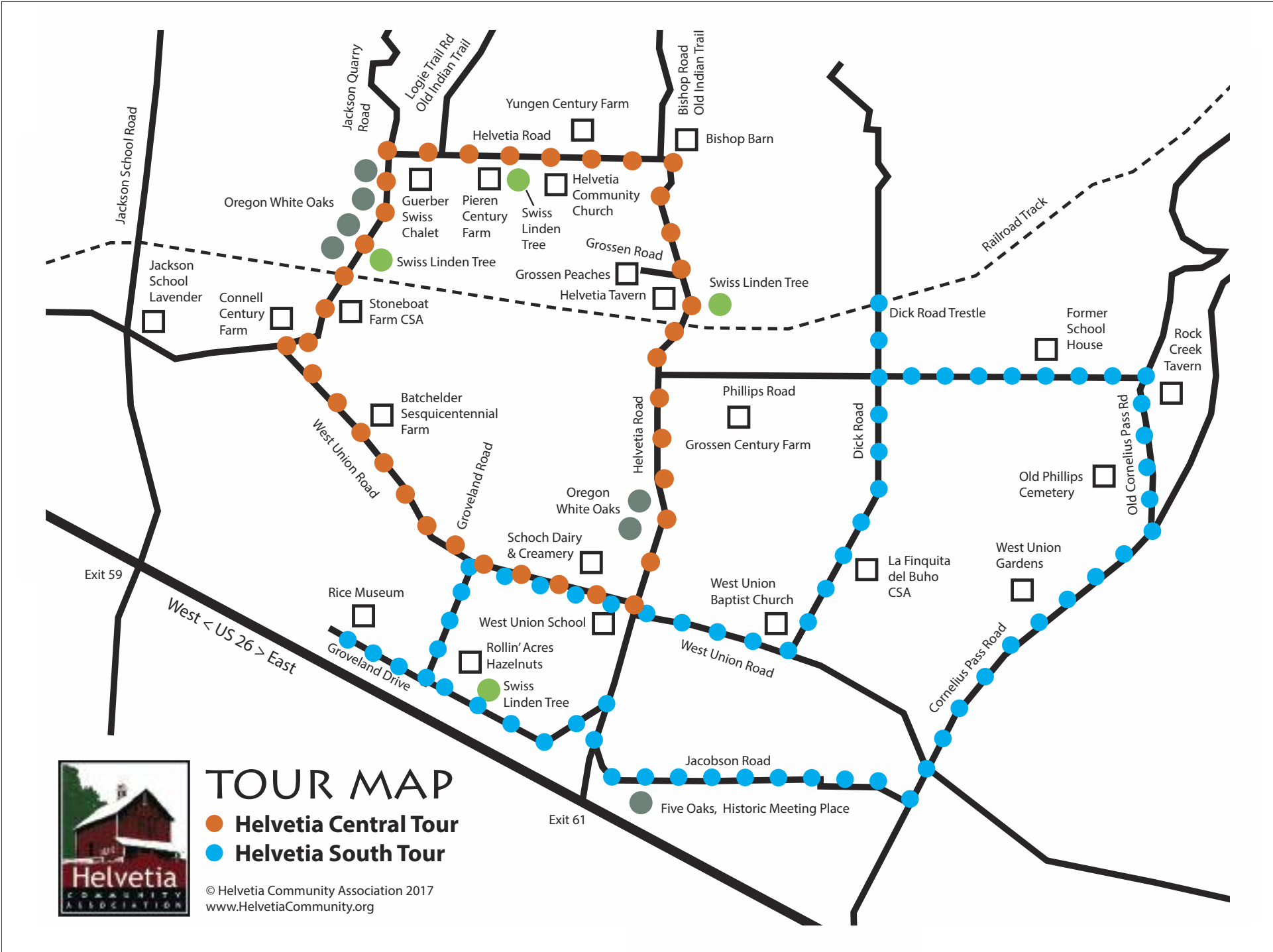
Somewhat rare in the world, Class 1 has "no significant limitations in use for crops." Limitations considered include soil type (potential fertility), climate, slope, rocks, and available water table in the growing season; for some crops irrigation is not required. Only Classes 1, 2, and 3 are suitable for cultivation. Classes 4 and 5 are severely restricted by slope or other conditions; Classes 6 thru 8 are unsuitable for cultivation. Soils maps show that this location contains the last remaining Class 1 Soils available for farming in Washington County.

● **About Soil Classification**

Don Schoen is a second-generation hazelnut farmer. Hazelnut trees are long-lived, as are grape vines, and can produce for 100 to 150 years. About a third of his crop is exported, but the majority of his hazelnuts are bought by local companies for hazelnut milkshakes and hazelnut bread. After the commercial harvest in the fall, Don opens his 3,600-tree hazelnut orchard to the public for U-pick.

● **Rollin' Acres Hazelnut Orchard**
503.647.3518

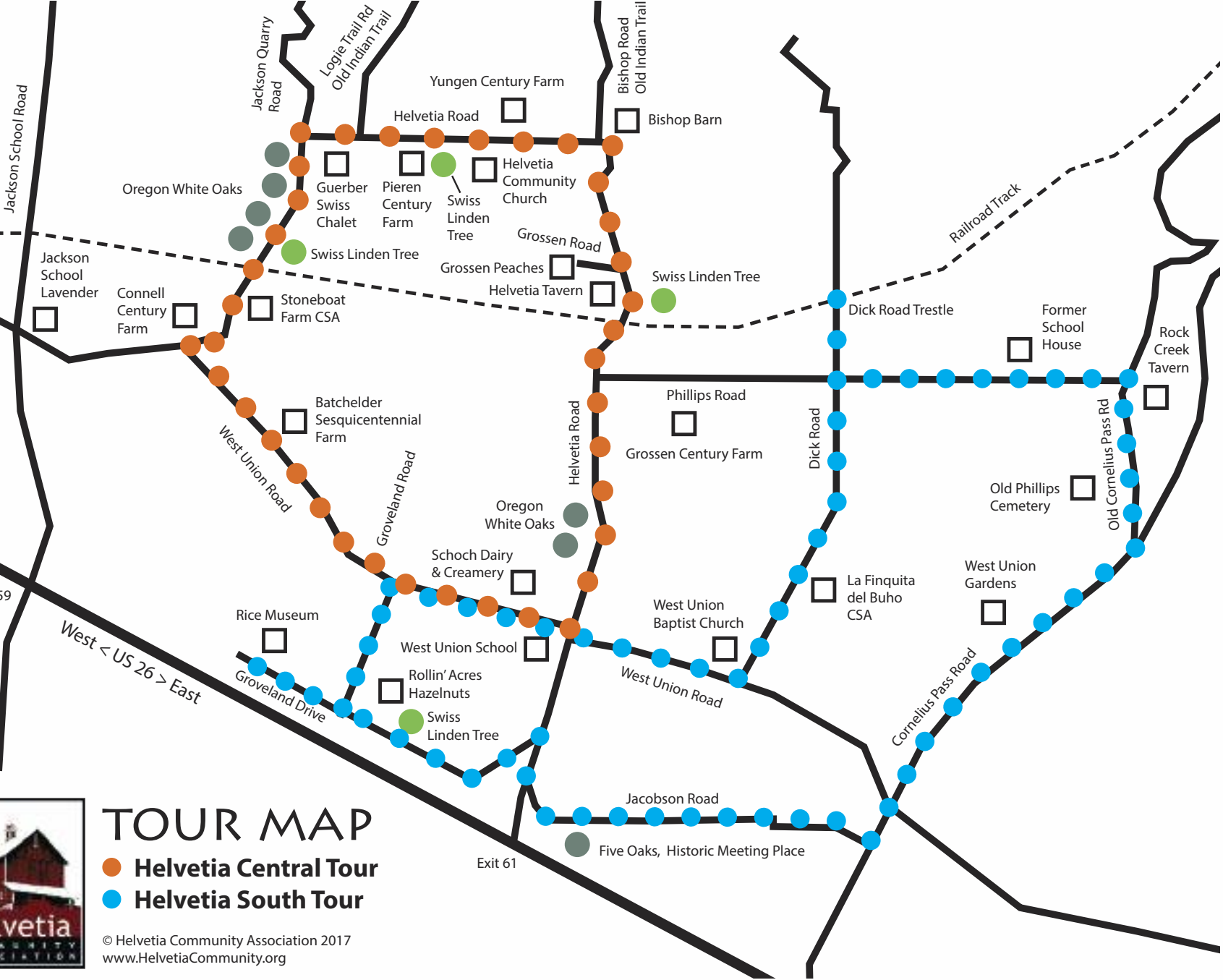




TOUR MAP

- Helvetia Central Tour
- Helvetia South Tour

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Along West Union Road...

West Union Road was named by early pioneers because it was a meeting place, or "union" of the "western frontier".

- **Schoch Dairy and Creamery**
503.647.2638

One of Helvetia's two working dairies, the Schoch Dairy sells organic milk produced by the cows on their 74-acre farm on West Union Road. Dave and Casey Schoch and their sons are a third-generation dairy family. Their on-farm creamery pasteurizes and bottles milk for local customers.



- **West Union Elementary School**

The School has been an integral part of the community for the past 150 years. Established in 1851, it is the oldest continuously operating public school in Oregon. It is in its third building and its second site. In 1948, the parent organization, West Union Community Club, began hosting a ham dinner annually each Veterans Day. Children in each grade contribute in some way to the success of the dinner, from decorating tables, to serving guests, to clearing tables - even providing entertainment.



- **West Union Baptist Church**

In 1844, seven members of the Baptist church formed the West Union Baptist Church in the log cabin home of David T. Lenox (Lenox Elementary School is named for him). In 1853, Lenox donated two acres of land from his donation land claim for a church to be built. Lenox was Captain of the first wagon train to cross the Rocky Mountains. The county recorder's deed describes the location as "where the timber and prairie meet". The church is the oldest Baptist church west of the Rockies and still offers weekly services. Many early pioneers are buried in the adjoining cemetery.



Along Dick Road...

Named for the Dick family who came from Russia via Nebraska, settling in Helvetia about 1885. Caution bicyclists: Part of Dick Road is gravel.

- **La Finquita del Buho CSA**
503.647.2595
www.finquita.com

La Finquita del Buho is a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farm which offers sustainable, locally-grown food to Portland area residents. Consumers join a CSA by signing up in advance for food shares. In return they receive fresh fruits and vegetables throughout the growing season. La Finquita del Buho, which means "owl farm" because of the resident barn owl, also hosts visits from local school children, conducts community food preservation workshops and a fun harvest festival.



Between 1906 and 1911, the Holcomb Creek Trestle (it's official name), was built by United Railways as part of the drive to provide electric interurban service between Portland and Banks. It is a timber pile-driven trestle, 1,168 feet in length and approximately 90 feet tall. It crosses Dick Road and spans Holcomb Creek. It is thought to be the highest and longest still-used wooden train trestle in the U.S. Fans even sponsor its own website.



- **Dick Road Trestle**
<http://www.traintrestle.com/>
<http://bridgehunter.com/or/washington/bh44802/>

Along Old Cornelius Pass Road...

In the early 1900's, Aldolph Fuegy, a Swiss immigrant, built a blacksmith shop on Cornelius Pass Road at the t-intersection of Phillips Road. By 1920, his son converted a workman's house on the site to the Rock Creek Store. After prohibition ended in the 1930's, he added a tavern and the Rock Creek Tavern became a hit. In the 1940's, busloads of Hillsboro residents who worked in the Portland shipyards stopped for the music and the brews. Now owned by the McMenamin brothers, this former blacksmith shop offers good food and nightly music.



- **McMenamin's Rock Creek Tavern**
503.645.3822
www.mcmenamins.com

Originally, the Helvetia Community Church had two locations. One was here, built in 1898, a year prior to the other one on Helvetia Road. The minister served both churches, and each church had a cemetery. When the Phillips Church was destroyed by arson in 1938, the congregation began attending the Helvetia Church for worship and members continued to maintain this old Phillips Cemetery.

- **The Old Phillips Cemetery**

Along Cornelius Pass Road...

A family farm since 1987, West Union Gardens is open to the public during Helvetia's bountiful berry season June through September. Their farmstand offers dozens of varieties of berries, both pre-picked and u-pick, along with veggies.

- **West Union Gardens**
503.645.1592
www.westuniongardens.com

Events in Helvetia SOUTH

June – Sept	West Union Gardens farm grown produce
July	Lavender Festival & self-guided tour
August	Rice Museum Summer Festival (first weekend in August)
October	Rollin' Acres Hazelnut u-pick
November	West Union Elementary Ham Dinner (always on Veteran's Day, November 11)
Nightly	Music at McMenamin's Rock Creek Tavern

We hope you enjoyed this tour!

This mapped guide is sponsored by Helvetia Community Association with a generous grant from the Washington County Cultural Coalition. We encourage and appreciate your feedback. Please send email to President@HelvetiaCommunity.org.



For more information about Helvetia, go to

www.HelvetiaCommunity.org

www.SaveHelvetia.org

www.facebook.com/SaveHelvetia

www.HelvetiaHeritage.org

To request a tour, call 503.647.5334

A special benefit of joining our organized, guided tours is enjoying our advanced arrangements for stops at selected sites along the way. When touring on your own in rural areas, please practice courtesy and caution! Find a downloadable PDF of this tour guide online at www.HelvetiaCommunity.org/directory.php

- Respect private property, including driveways, crops, and livestock.
- Beware that your voices carry well beyond bicycling partners, and rural residents may not appreciate it.
- Allow traffic to keep flowing and be watchful for other users of the roadways -- autos, cyclists, farm equipment and wildlife.
- There are no bike lanes nor shoulders on roads in Helvetia; and the speed limit for cars is 55 mph on most roads.
- Part of Dick Road is graveled. Cornelius Pass Road is especially dangerous with heavy car and truck traffic at high speeds.



Helvetia Community Association (HCA) is a cultural, educational 501(c)(3) non-profit organization whose mission is to inspire understanding and enjoyment of Helvetia's people, land and history.



Save Helvetia is registered as a 501(c)(4) organization to advance policies, leaders, and actions that protect Helvetia's treasured resources.

Save Helvetia is an Affiliate partner with 1000 Friends of Oregon.

Photos in this publication are sourced from volunteer photographers, Adrian Amabisca, Mary Pruitt, Faun Hosey and Cherry Amabisca.