

## Preserve the Old Mt. Hood Highway as a trail Build 2 pedestrian bridges

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Parts of the long abandoned **Mt. Hood Loop Highway** near **Government Camp** in **Oregon**. should be preserved for both recreational and historic reasons. This used to be a highway, but is now overgrown with vegetation and reduced to a barely passable trail in many places. It should be preserved for **bicycling** and **hiking** and for **historic reasons** (the Oregon Trail followed part of that route). Here is a group of our ski club members bicycling on the remains of that old road.

What is needed is to build **two pedestrian bridges** to re-connect historic Laurel Hill with the two adjacent segments of the old highway which are now dead ends because the new highway cut right through them.



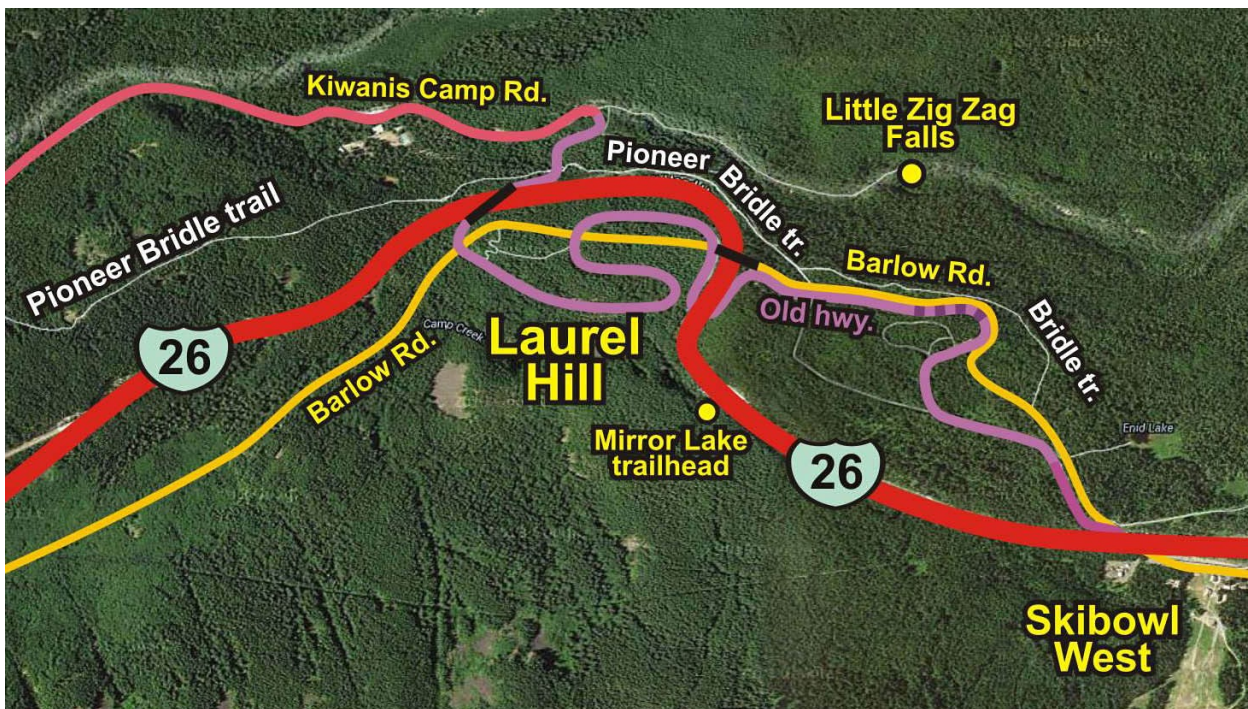
The two pedestrian bridges would make it possible for people to access Laurel Hill from both Government Camp and from the town of Rhododendron. Without them, Laurel Hill is getting more and more isolated and hard to access, because the latest improvements currently being implemented on Highway 26 include setting up a concrete median barrier, which will make it impossible to cross highway 26 on foot or on a bicycle.

The photo here shows the location where one of these pedestrian bridges would be needed. We are standing at a spot above the new Highway 26, about 2 miles west of Government Camp, very near the Mirror Lake trailhead. The hill on the opposite bank is Laurel Hill. This was a few years ago, when we could still cross the highway on foot at this location. But the new concrete barrier in the middle of the highway will make it impossible to reach Laurel Hill from here.

See details and a map at <http://www.mthigh.org/Articles/Mt-Hood-Loop-Hwy-at-Laurel-Hill.pdf> (Scroll down to the last page of that document).

Also see the attached map, which shows the location of the proposed two bridges, indicated with short black lines across the red highway. On this map:

- a) The **YELLOW** line shows the famous Barlow Road, which was part of the Oregon Trail since 1845.
- b) The **PURPLE** line shows the old, abandoned Mt. Hood Highway, the first paved road that led from Portland to Mt. Hood.
- c) **Laurel Hill** is the site of the steepest part of the whole Oregon Trail. It is the place where the pioneers had to tie trees to the back of their wagons to act as a brake for the steep descent.



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